2d artist

Digital Painting Magazine
Issue 086 February 2013

Interview
Markus Lovadina

Articles
Sketchbook of
Sean Andrew Murray

The Gallery
Dennis Chan,
Jordi Gonzalez,
plus more!

In the final part of our Custom Brushes for Characters series, **Chase Toole** paints this beautiful Period Drama Girl.

CUSTOM BRUSHES FOR CHARACTERS

NEW! **Off World Vehicle Design**
This brand new series looks at designing vehicles from another world. **Matt Tkocz** is first up, as he paints the Speeder.

Residential Architecture
Gerhard Mozsi brings us the second part of the Designing New Worlds series, looking at the architecture of an alien planet.

The Seaport
Ignacio Bazan Lazcano concludes this two-part series, as he adds color to his scene, and also talks about brush management.

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the February issue of *2DArtist*! I hope you all had a great January and 2013 has been an artistic year for you so far. In this month's magazine we have lots of inspiring work to get your creative juices flowing.

This month's cover image was created by **Chase Toole** for the final instalment in the interesting and detailed Creating Custom Brushes tutorial series. This tutorial series has seen our artists demonstrate how to create an exciting variety of custom brushes, then use them to detail parts of a character. Chase rounds the series off by demonstrating his use of custom brushes to paint a Spanish period drama girl.

Brand new in this issue, is the first part of our Off-World Vehicle Design series. In this series our artists will be approaching the given brief as if it was for the games industry, to demonstrate techniques used when creating a vehicle concept. **Matt Tkocz** kicks things off with a cool speeder vehicle.

We continue with the Designing New Worlds series, which takes a comprehensive look at creating a world from a concept perspective. **Gerhard Mozsi** investigates the processes and techniques that can be employed to create an extraordinary society, from the initial idea through to the finished image. In this installment, Gerhard focuses on creating a residential landscape for his world, concentrating on the mood and atmosphere, whilst exploring how to use light to create drama.

In other news, **Ignacio Bazan Lazcano** concludes his two-part Seaport tutorial about how to draw a complex scene by discussing and demonstrating the use of color and digital painting; we catch up with creative director and freelance concept artist **Marcus Lovadina** (aka malo) to find out about his background in art, creative process, influences and more; and **Aekkarat Sumutchaya** gives us an insight into the painting process for his macabre manga image *Kitchen Killer*, which you may remember from the September 2012 issue's gallery. To found things off, we also have a brilliant sketchbook by the imaginative **Sean Andrew Murray** and a gallery that features some awesome new artwork from some of the best in the industry. Enjoy!

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What's in this month's issue?

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Image by Douah Badr

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Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Setting up your PDF reader

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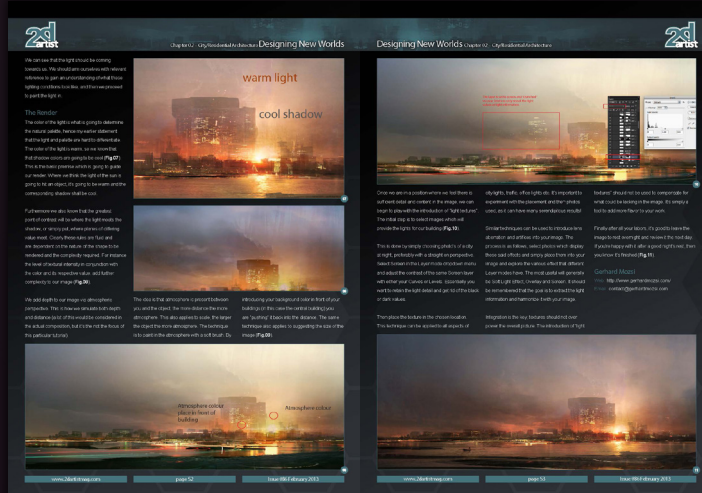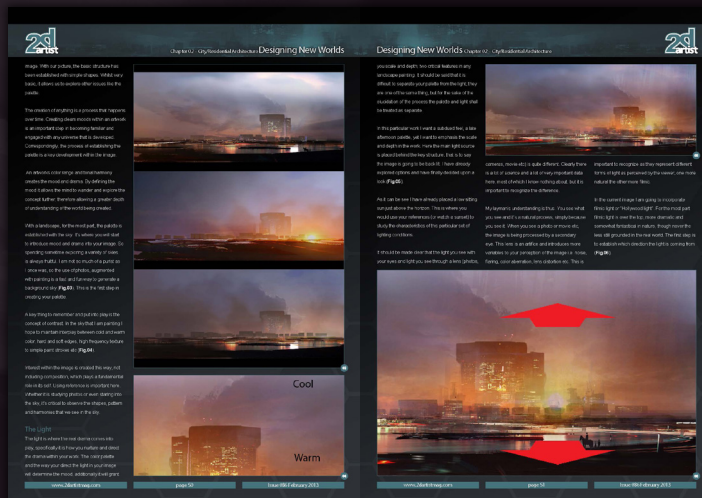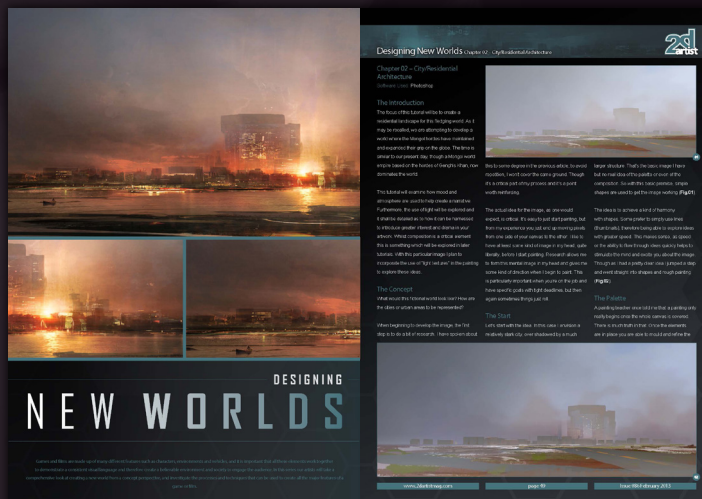
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1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the View menu, then Page display;
3. Select Two-up Continuous, making sure that Show Cover Page is also selected.

Markus Lovadina
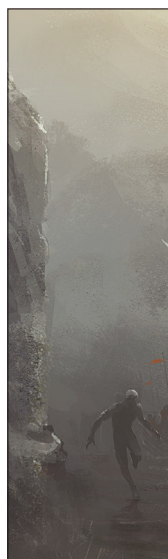
Markus Lovadina (malo) is currently working as a Creative Director in the advertising industry, as well as a freelance Concept Artist/Illustrator. Over recent years he's had the opportunity to work for companies such as Acclaim Entertainment, Activision and Intel. He has also worked on a couple of movie projects and a variety of book covers too.

http://malosart.blogspot.de/

malo74@gmx.de

Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com
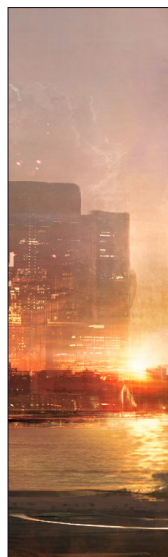
Sean Andrew Murray

Sean Andrew Murray is an Illustrator and Senior Concept Artist at Harmonix Games in Boston, MA. Later in 2013, Sean plans on releasing his first self-published illustrated book entitled: *Gateway – The Book of Wizards*, which he successfully funded through Kickstarter in May of 2012.

http://www.seanandrewmurray.com

sean@seanandrewmurray.com

Gerhard Mozsi

is an Australian artist who has worked both remotely and on-site for studios in the USA, Austria, Germany, Australia, and the UK. He studied traditional art at university before exchanging the paintbrush for a Wacom, and now works primarily in the digital medium. He has been working as a concept artist and matte painter for film and games development for the last years, and his work can be seen on his website and blog.

http://www.gerhardmozsi.com/

contact@gerhardmozsi.com

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

Lives in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires where he has been working for four years in the games industry as an illustrator and concept artist. He currently works for TimeGate Studios where his tasks include developing the aesthetics of the game from the beginning of the process. In the future he'd like for Argentina to become well-known for its artistic talent.

http://www.ignaciobazanart.com/

i.bazanlazcano@gmail.com
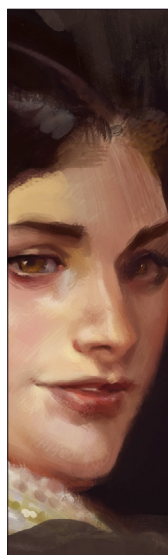
Chase Toole

Chase Toole (aka tooled) is a concept artist and freelance illustrator working out of Montreal Canada. Chase is currently working on AAA titles with the immensely talented team at THQ Montreal. He enjoys storytelling and creating moody images, and is always looking for inspiration in strange places and new experiences.

chasetoole@gmail.com

Aekkarat Sumutchaya

Aekkarat Sumutchaya is currently working as an Art Director and also a co-founder of ANIMANIA, an animation studio located in Bangkok, Thailand. Aekkarat 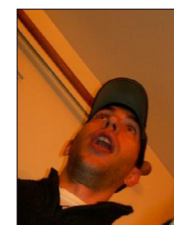is inspired by his lifestyle, experimenting and by the environment. He then layers these ideas with stories, personal opinions, and wild imagination. Aekkarat hopes people will enjoy his work and get his message.

http://aekkarat.blogspot.com/

webang111@gmail.com
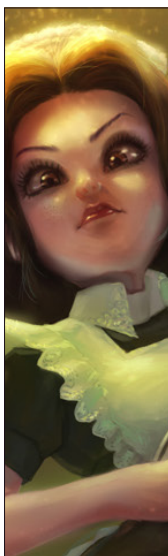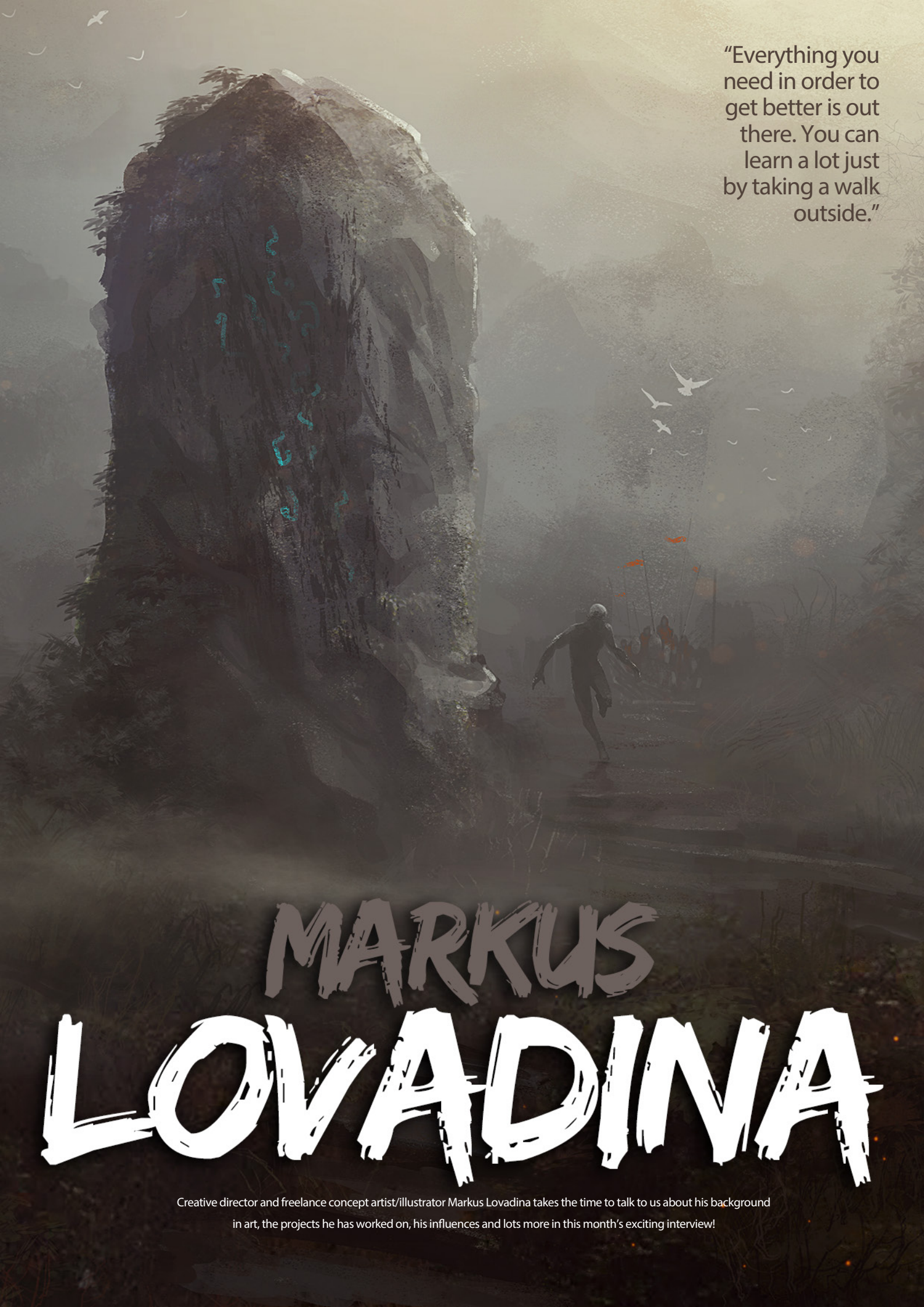
Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, 'making of' writers, and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: jess@3dtotal.com

Image by Jordi Gonzalez

MARKUS
LOVADINA

Creative director and freelance concept artist/illustrator Markus Lovadina takes the time to talk to us about his background in art, the projects he has worked on, his influences and lots more in this month's exciting interview!

Hello Markus, thanks for taking the time to talk to *2DArtist*! We are very familiar with your work here, but for all those who aren't could you introduce yourself to our readers, and tell us a bit about what you do and how you got where you are today?

Hi there. First off – I have to say thanks! It's a big honor for me. My name is Markus aka malo and currently I'm working as a creative art director in the advertisement industry and as a freelance concept artist/illustrator as well.

As a creative director I'm responsible for all the "creative" output our studio will produce – no matter if its classical graphic design, editorial design, 3D works or video production. I spend most of the time developing ideas and I also monitor the quality of each single project.

As a concept artist/illustrator I work on a variety of projects – this includes book covers, game art, movie projects and a bunch of indie projects as well. Maybe one day I'll be able to just focus on painting.

How I got there is a good question. I've been in the business for around about 17 years now and during that time I have seen and learnt a lot. Every experience I've had has pushed my skills further. I guess the biggest and most important thing is to keep working on your skills and to develop your understanding of things.

When you were just beginning, what helped you the most in terms of a learning process and gaining experience?

I began digital painting in the summer of 2011. In the years before I put my hands on digital tools, I mostly worked traditionally, with pen and paper, oil, acrylic and cans. So I already had a bit of painting knowledge and due to my daily business as a designer, I was pretty familiar with Photoshop.

In the beginning I read and watched as many tutorials as possible – mostly 3DTotal's eBooks and DVDs from Gnomon. It's pretty interesting to see different techniques from different artists. Also the way they proceed is interesting and gives you a great insight into their painting process. On top of that it's good to analyze artworks that you like, looking for things like what technique, colors and brushes are used, etc. Analyzing is the key to getting better as an artist; at least for me.

Can you take us through your typical work process? What tools do you use to get from an idea to a professional, finished piece?

Of course, although there isn't a typical process that I use. The process always depends on the image and what kind of look and mood I'd like to achieve. Most of the time I start with blocking in rough shapes or pretty loose lines. Later on I try to see "something" in it and start developing it further. Adding details and playing around with colors will come in later.

The first thing I like to establish is the composition and the mood. The rest is pure painting fun. Sometimes you have to work with references – especially if the time frame and the budget are pretty tight. But it's a good and quick way to show the idea or concept to a client.

What is your favorite project you have worked on to date, and can you tell us about any exciting projects you are working on at the moment?

There's a bunch of projects I really enjoyed working on it. If I have to pick one, I'd like to name *Stone Rage*. It was one of the first projects in which I had to leave my comfort zone (landscapes) and paint characters and creatures. The whole game is set in a prehistoric time and I had to paint animals and characters that fit that specific time. It was a huge learning curve and fun. Regarding actual projects – I started some time ago with a personal project, called *The Third Appearance*. The whole project

started as a character design exercise. During the painting process a small story evolved and I have kept working on it since. The story is set in the "now" and it's about a virus that has infected a huge number of citizens. The infected citizens are going through a metamorphosis and turning into something creature-like, with tentacles, dark eyes, etc.

In the story you have two factions – the good ones (not infected) and the bad ones (infected). Then you have what will happen between them. To be honest I'm still developing the story as a whole. The downside is that I'm more used to images than words. I could see some sort of art

book or graphic novel at the end of the project. Well, we'll see!

Do you have any advice for anyone wanting to pursue a career in the digital art industry?
It's pretty hard for me to give advice in general. It always depends on what kind of genre you'd like to work on. One of the most important things is for your work to fit the style of the company you'd like to work for. Try to make a bunch of concepts/illustration based on that particular style and look, and then apply.

On top of that: keep your eyes open. Everything you need in order to get better is out there. You

can learn a lot just by taking a walk outside, and seeing how light is reflected by certain materials and how people act in different situations. Daily life can be really inspiration and teach you a lot. Later on, try to bring that information onto your canvas. For sure, a good understanding of anatomy, light, shadow and color theory is absolutely necessary. The rest is practice, practice and practice!

What are your major artistic influences? Are there any particular artists, music or movies that have inspired you?
Well, there are a lot! To name a few: everyday life, nature and a huge variety of awesomely

talented artist like Sparth, Ian McQue, John Park, Brad Wright, Baronteri and many more. Music also plays a big role during a painting session – depending on the mood I'd like to achieve, the music changes. For artists, it's very interesting to see different techniques used by different artists. I'm particularly interested in how others use their brushes.

I do watch a lot of movies – sometimes two or three times. The first time is just for the movie itself, the second time I focus on the effects and the camera work. In my opinion you learn a lot by watching and analyzing movies.

Could you tell us about your favorite picture to date, and why it's your favorite? And which picture did you find very difficult to paint and why?

One of my all time favorite images is *Chase*. I can't tell you exactly what it is, but for me this image tells a great story, and has a great mood and colors. On top of that, people are able to interpret their own story from it.

I actually painted some "technical designs" for my T3A series, such as vehicles and weapons. That technical stuff is pretty hard for me because you have to think about usability, believability and in the end, it should still look good. Painting landscapes or more organic shapes is, at least for me, a lot easier than hard-edged technical structures. And to be honest, I really suck at painting space ships!

THE THIRD
APPEARANCE
POLICE CAR CONCEPT
STANDARD VEHICLE

POLICE

You are involved in such a variety of areas, which of these areas of work do you enjoy the most and why?

I really enjoy working in each area, as long as it pushes me to be creative. The best thing that could happen to an artist is the challenge of creating new things. Okay, we can't reinvent the wheel, but maybe we could make it more interesting or appealing.

What I really love to do is combine my every day work and my painting into something unique. I absolutely love books and have a ton at home (I always get in trouble when ordering a new book). So working on book projects, no matter if it's a cover or an entire book, is the most enjoyable thing that could happen to me.

What do you like to do in your free time, away from work and your computer?

It's hard to switch off the "work mode" button,

because you are surrounded by so many visual influences and every influence could be turned into a great idea. But if there is a chance to recharge my batteries, I love to spend my spare time with my lady and my kids. Just doing senseless thing and enjoying the time.

What can the art community expect from you in the future?

Hopefully a lot! Right now I'm working on my T3A series, which will hopefully end in an art book. There is still a lot to do for that series. Besides that, I hope to improve in my character/creature and technical skills. So there will be a lot of sketches, creatures and vehicles. And definitely landscapes!

Markus Lovadina
Web: http://malosart.blogspot.de/
Email: malo74@gmx.de
Interview by: Jess Serjent-Tipping

HOW MUCH
DID YOU LEARN
LAST WEEK?

PETR BALATKA

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TIME IN SCHOOL: TWO MONTHS

TOTAL MODELING TIME: ONE WEEK

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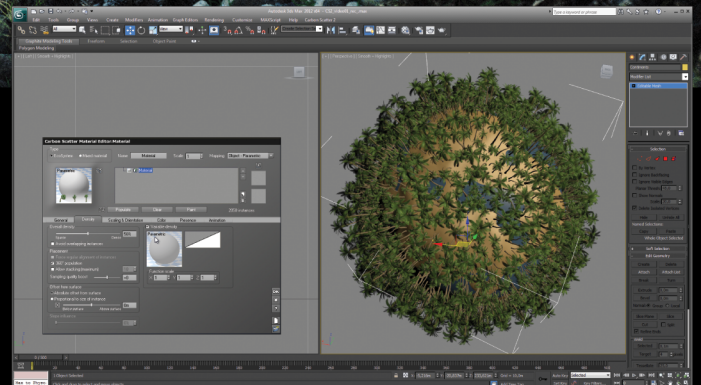## For Maya, Cinema4D and 3ds Max

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"I think architecture can be designed in the same way that characters are. Buildings have personalities, stories, and quirks, just like people."

SKETCHBOOK
Of Sean Andrew Murray

This month's sketchbook is by professional concept artist and illustrator Sean Andrew Murray. Currently working at Harmonix as a senior concept artist, Sean gives us an insight into his world of wizards and creatures.

Sketchbook of
Sean Andrew Murray

I recognize that this creature's axe is non-traditional, impractical even; maybe we are simply ignorant of its real usefulness (**Fig.01**).

I love how adding a strange, cat-like creature with antlers into this sketch almost instantly makes it a fantasy piece, whereas without it, it may not be totally evident (**Fig.02**).
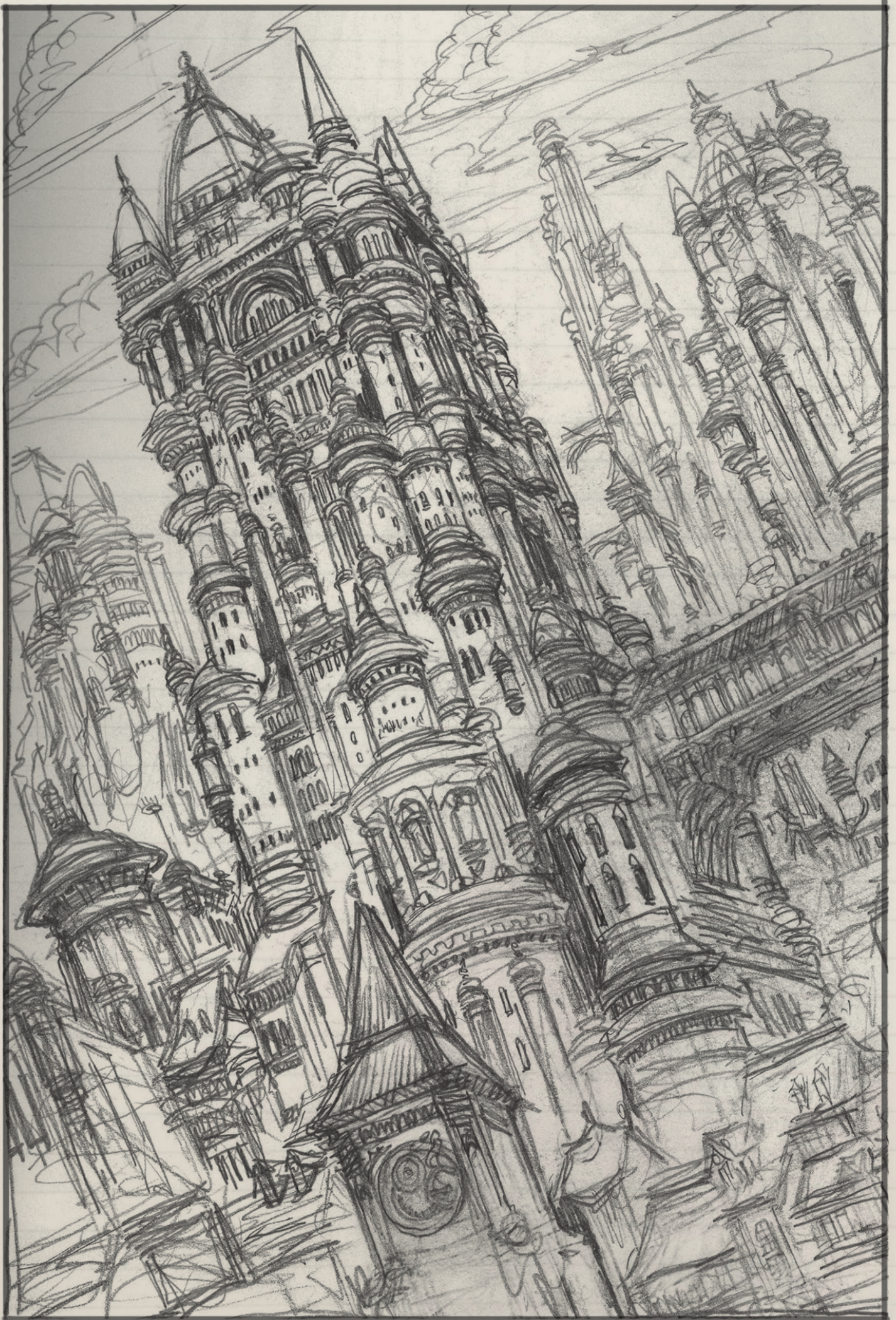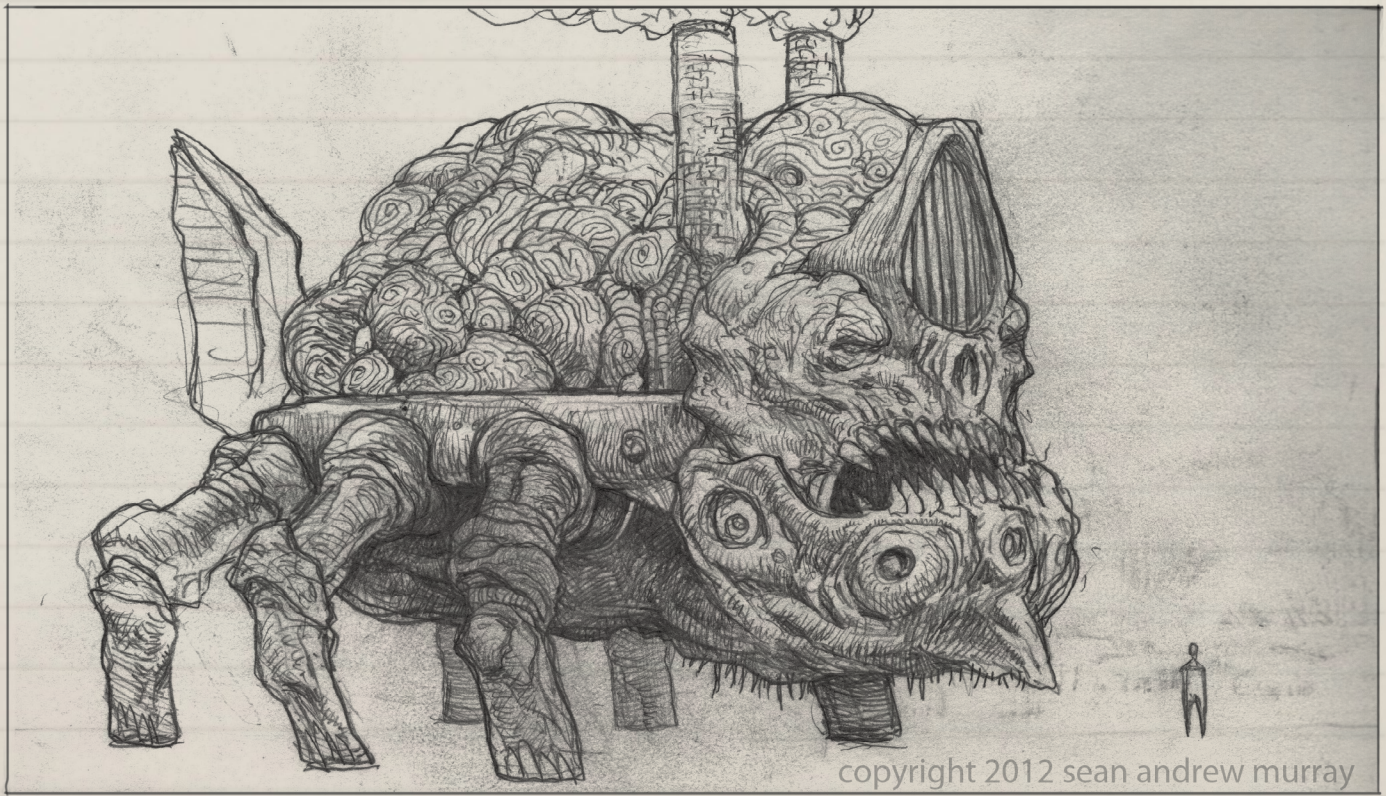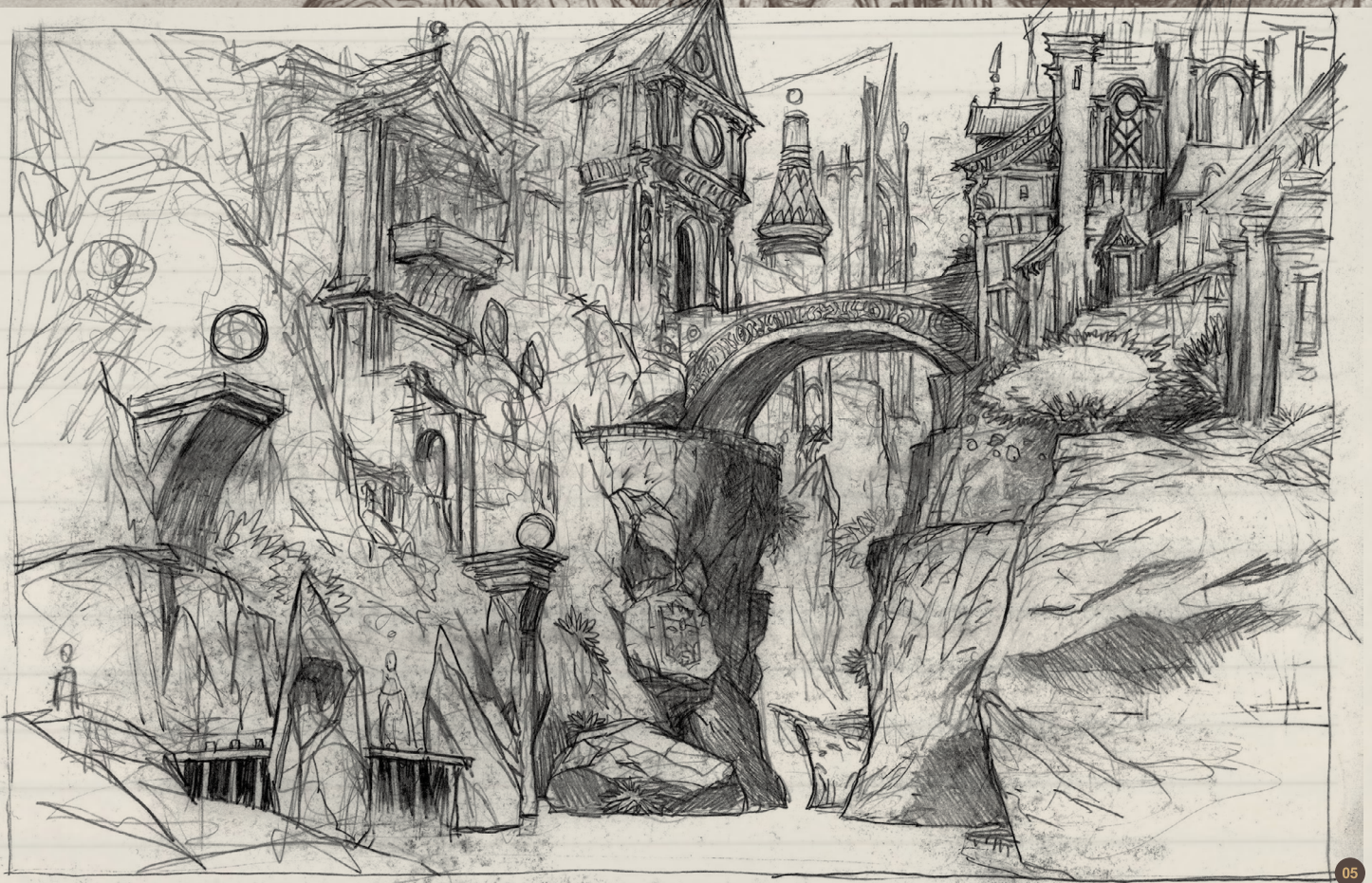
01

02

This is a sketch of a character that will be in my forthcoming self-published book: *Gateway – The Book of Wizards* (**Fig.03**).

I think architecture can be designed in the same way that characters are. Buildings have personalities, stories, and quirks, just like people (**Fig.04**).

03

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Bridges are often the most interesting things in a city. They don't even have to be ornate; sometimes it's just the contrast of shapes that makes them stand out (**Fig.05**).
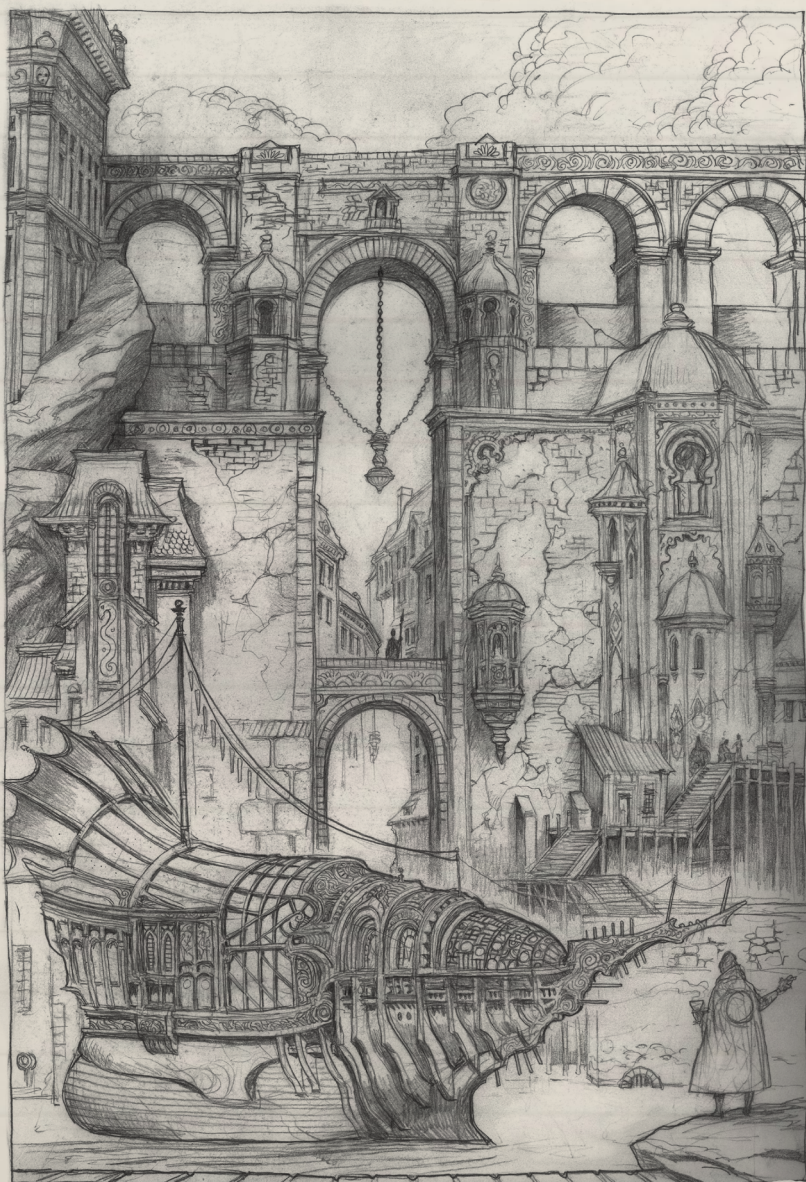
Huge, living machinery is a really interesting concept. This probably comes from a childhood fascination with trains and tractors. They seem to growl and grumble like a monster does (**Fig.06**).
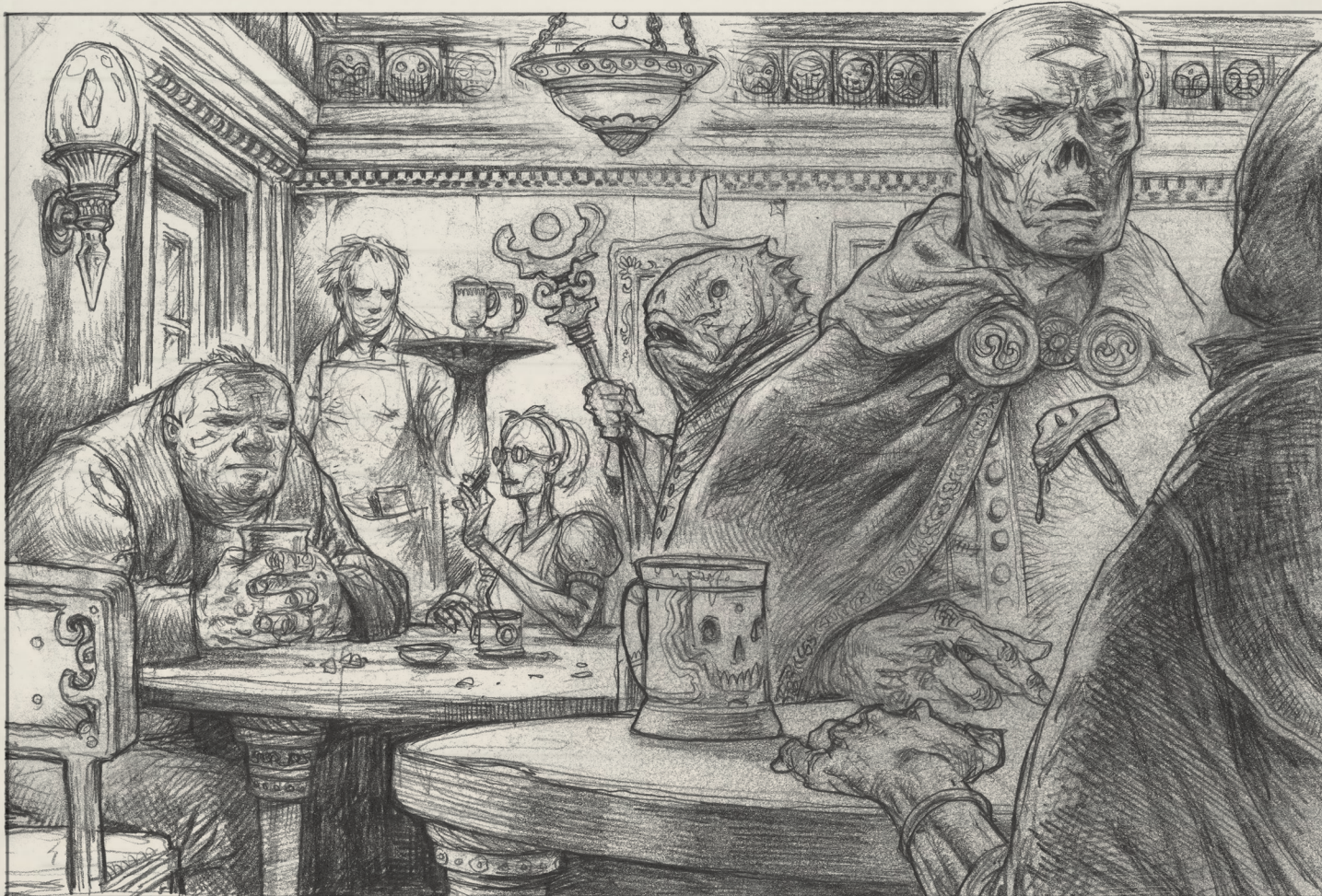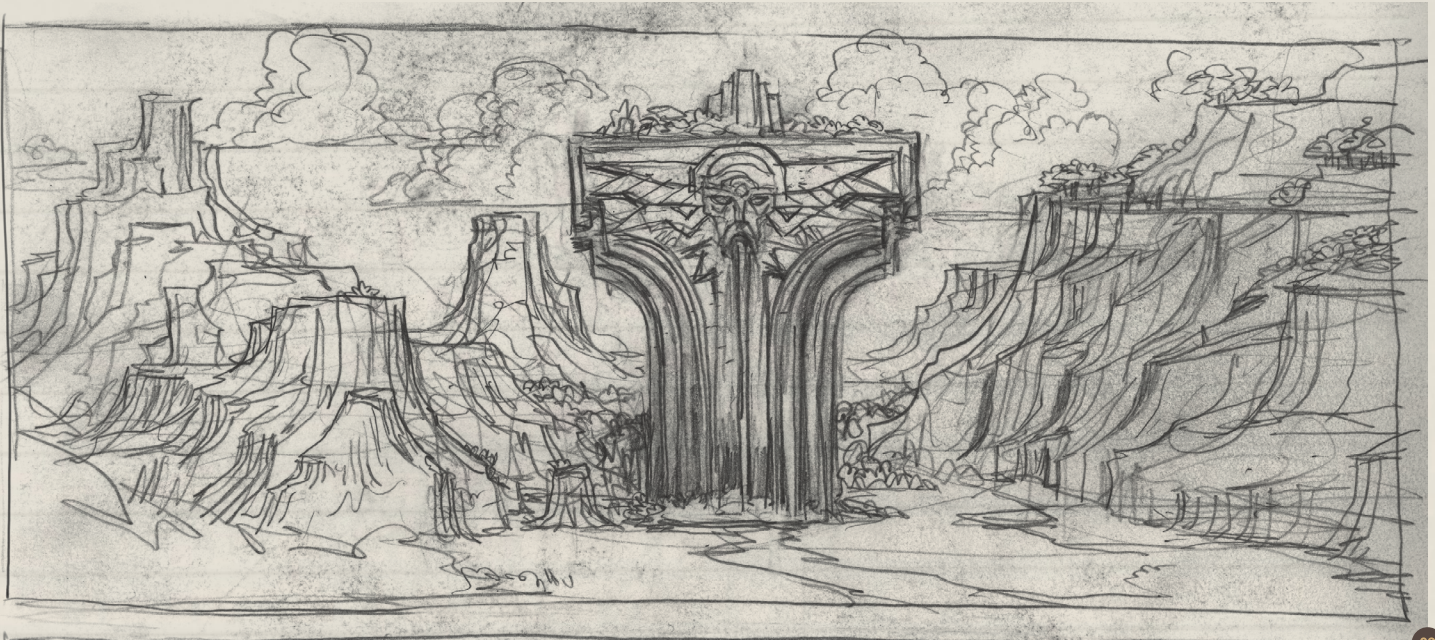
07

This is essentially my "Cantina Scene" for Gateway.
Although Gateway has its share of pubs, I also think of it
as having more of a café culture, like Paris (**Fig.07**).

It's about time we have more
interesting vehicle designs in
fantasy worlds; why let science
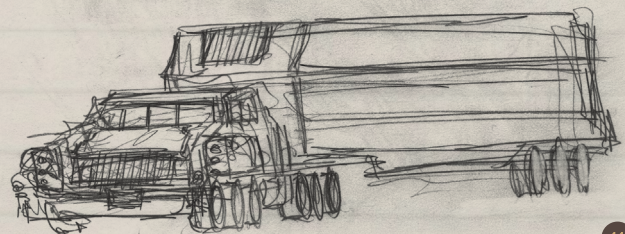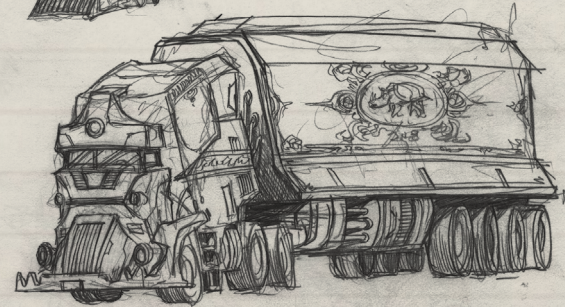fiction have all the fun (**Fig.08**)?

08

Shrines and temples are a constant visual obsession of mine. They can literally be anything, which is why they are so exciting (**Fig.09**).
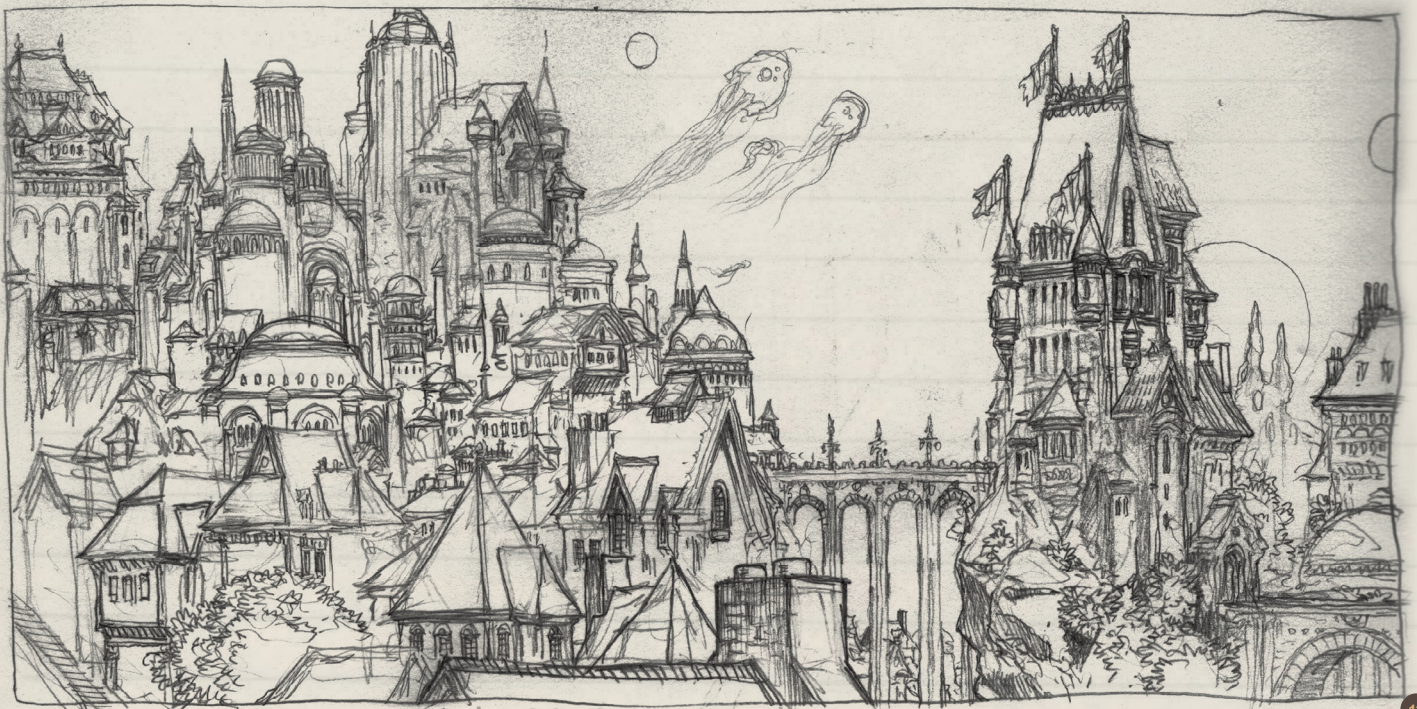
Someday I plan on doing a series of paintings of bizarre creatures doing relatively mundane things, like making a sandwich, cleaning up a spill, or playing with a child's toy (**Fig.10**).
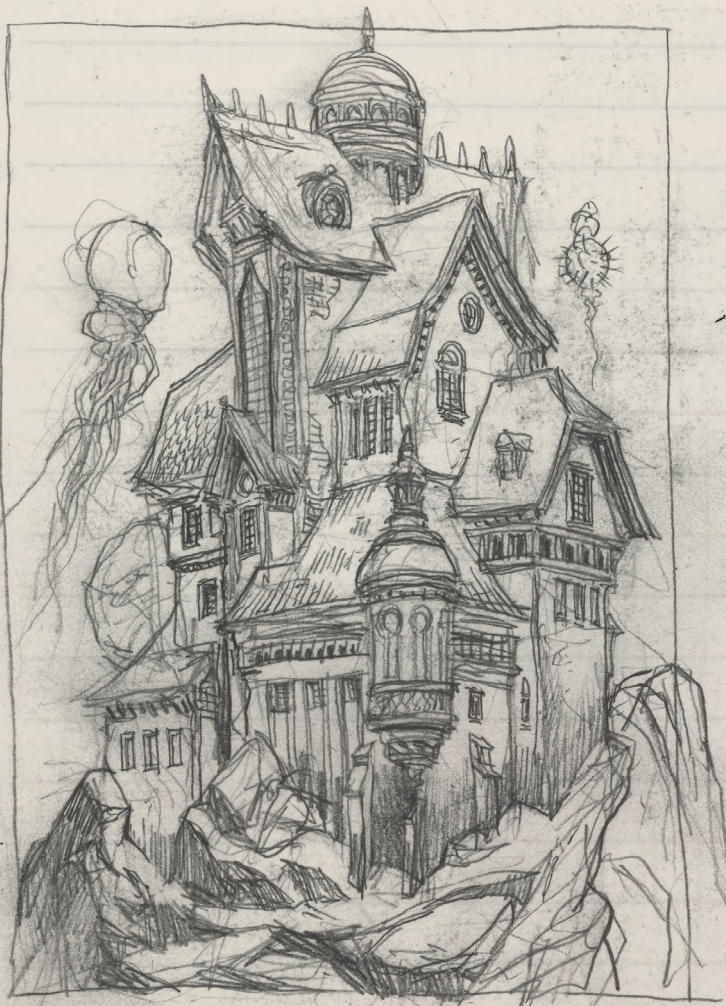
I hope that stuff gets more Baroque and ornate in the future, as opposed to less. Imagine if trucks like **Fig.11** were driving around!

12

13

14

I think the key to drawing a compelling cityscape is understanding roof shapes. Not every roof is the same, especially in a city where many different styles of architecture overlap (**Fig.12**).

Giant air-squids can often be a nuisance in Gateway. Strong winds blow them off course, and sometimes right onto rooftops. The clean-up is often messy and expensive, and many insurance policies don't offer coverage (**Fig.13**).
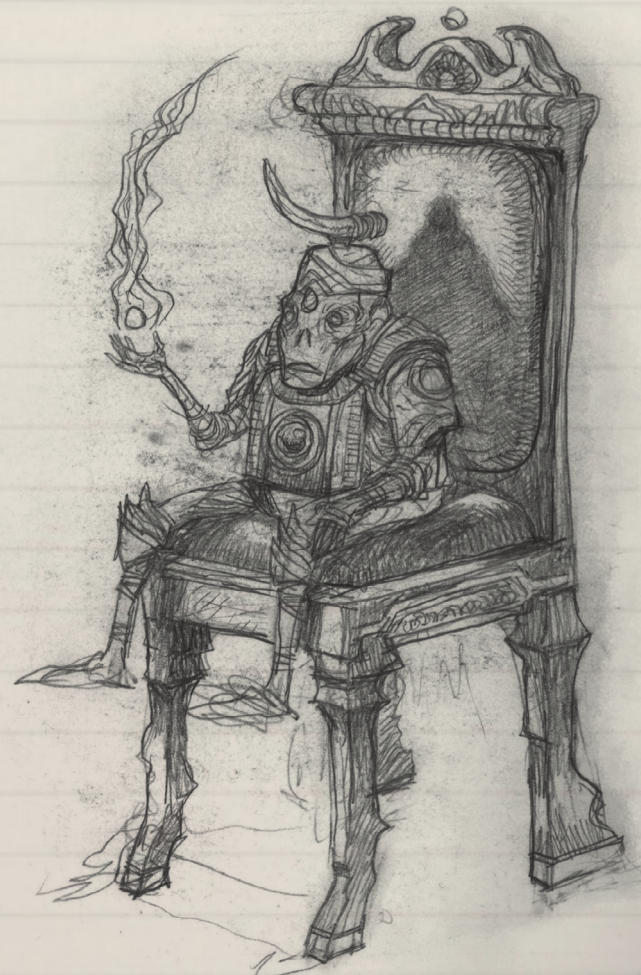
In **Fig.14** is the chair too big or the person too small?

Sean Andrew Murray
Web: http://seanandrewmurray.blogspot.co.uk/
Email: sean@seanandrewmurray.com

THE GALLERY

Acontius

Fuad Ghaderi

fuadghaderi@yahoo.com

(Right)

Robbery

Simon Weaner

http://simonweaner.daportfolio.com

simonweaner@gmail.com

(Below)

Decisive Battle

Kazuhiro Oya

http://kazuhiro-oya.com

ooya.kazuhiro@hotmail.com

Snow Day

Nick Hong
http://nickong1205.blogspot.com
nickong1205@gmail.com

Unique Beauty
Mohammad Algalad
http://algaladart.blogspot.com/
elgalad_mail@yahoo.com

Back Home

Douah Badr

http://douahbadr.blogspot.com

badr_douah@yahoo.fr

(Above)

Mining Started

Sergey Musin

http://www.samfx.com

samfxi@gmail.com

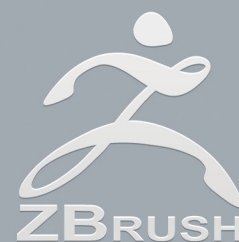(Below)

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OFF WORLD
VEHICLE DESIGN

CHAPTER 01

The ability to sketch and render vehicles is an important asset in the field of concept design. In this tutorial series each artist has been given a brief description of a possible vehicle, which they will approach like a games brief to demonstrate the techniques used when creating a vehicle concept.

Chapter 01 – Speeder

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

My task for this concept was to design a fast and agile personal vehicle that was maneuverable across both land and water. Since I have no real experience writing tutorials, I first had to figure out what I wanted to talk about. I came to the conclusion that most tutorials tend to discuss technique, rendering and Photoshop tools, but very few deal with the thought process when being presented with a design problem. I'm going to focus more on my personal internal approach and the issues I keep dealing with when struggling my way through the design process.

Getting Started

I don't often have a clear idea where I want to take a given design brief right off the bat, and even if I did, the first idea is rarely the best. So as expected, I was not blessed with a brilliant

epiphany this time around either. Hoping to stumble upon something of value, I just started sketching mindlessly.

I simply began to lay down shapes that I thought looked cool. I didn't hesitate to let myself be inspired by whatever ridiculousness came to mind.

In the first sketching stages I prefer to stick to side views because this type of vehicle reads most clearly from the side, and drawing in perspective is hard and I just didn't want to deal with that. It's difficult enough to come up with a decent idea without having to struggle with fancy perspective drawings (**Fig.01**).

Decisions

I would say the most important step in the whole design process is deciding on the direction that the concept is going to go in. A bad choice at this stage will lead to an eternity of pain and suffering!

So I looked at my sketches and picked the bits and pieces I thought had potential, and decided to do some sort of hot rod-inspired hover bike with exposed engine parts.

I think it's important to be able to pitch your concept to someone in one sentence. It doesn't matter how ridiculous that pitch might sound, as long as it gets someone excited. If you can't simplify your concept into one line, you might not have a concept at all, just a flashy image.

Patience

Often I get carried away and find myself jumping ahead into rendering too early, without having found a halfway decent design first. So I constantly remind myself to slow down and take the time to tweak the design the best I can in the early stages. I've found the best way to counteract this impulse to jump ahead is to stay away from any rendering tools as long as possible. That's why I prefer to sketch with lines instead of shapes. It helps me to resist the
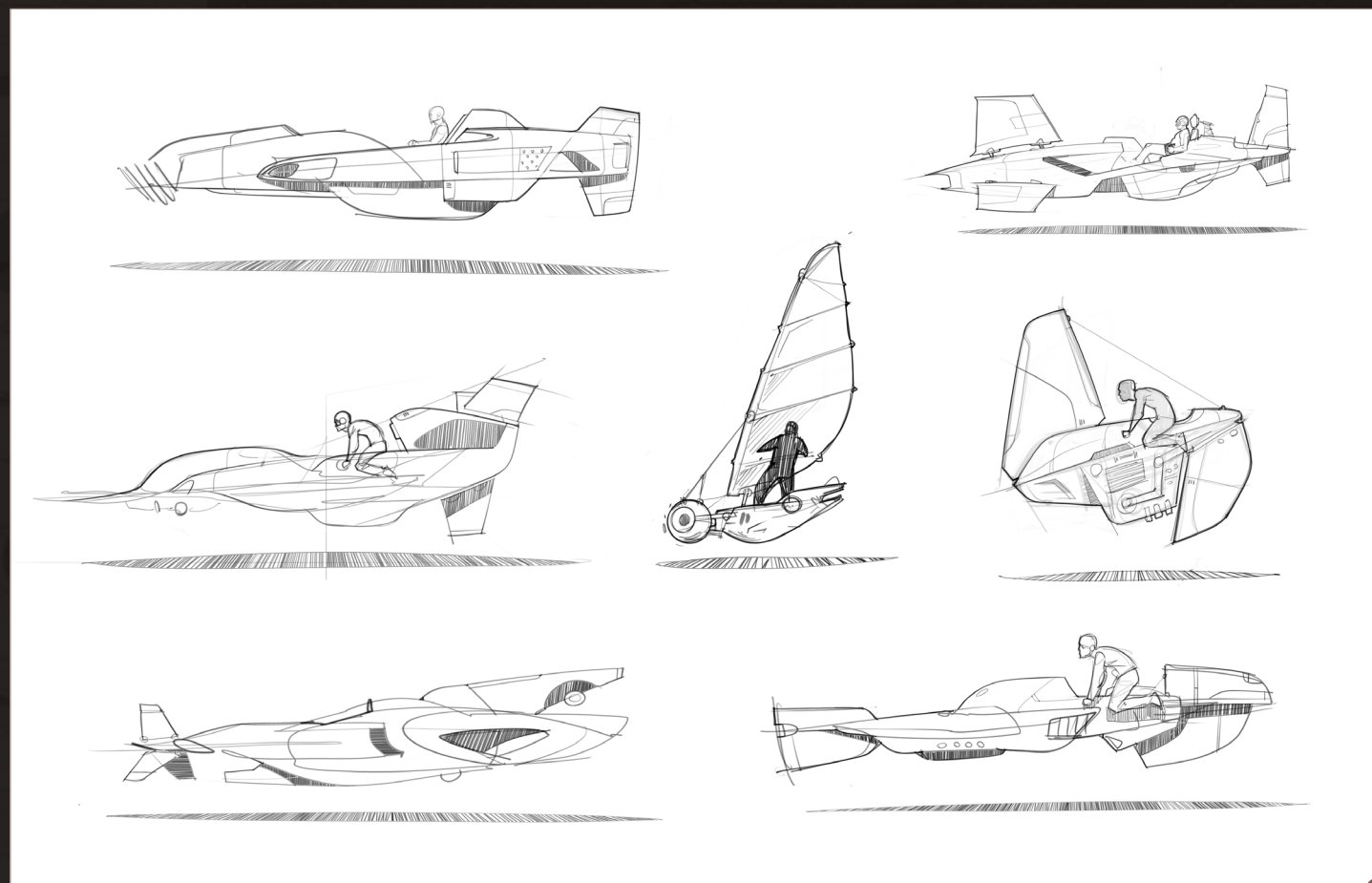
temptation of jumping into the rendering process before my design is ready (**Fig.02**).

I recommend always working on at least two projects at the same time. That way, you can always take breaks from a particular design and work on something else in the meantime to avoid tunnel vision. Jumping back and forth between multiple projects will help you judge your work more objectively and make it easier to spot flaws.

Context

Because nothing in the world exists isolated on a white background, I tried to ground my design in some kind of environment early on. The chosen context would hopefully inform further design decisions when it came to the composition, color and mood of the final piece, as well as the vehicle itself. Having an environment was also going to help describe what kind of vehicle it was without me having to explain everything.

On top of that, putting your design in the context of a full scene will aid the final presentation
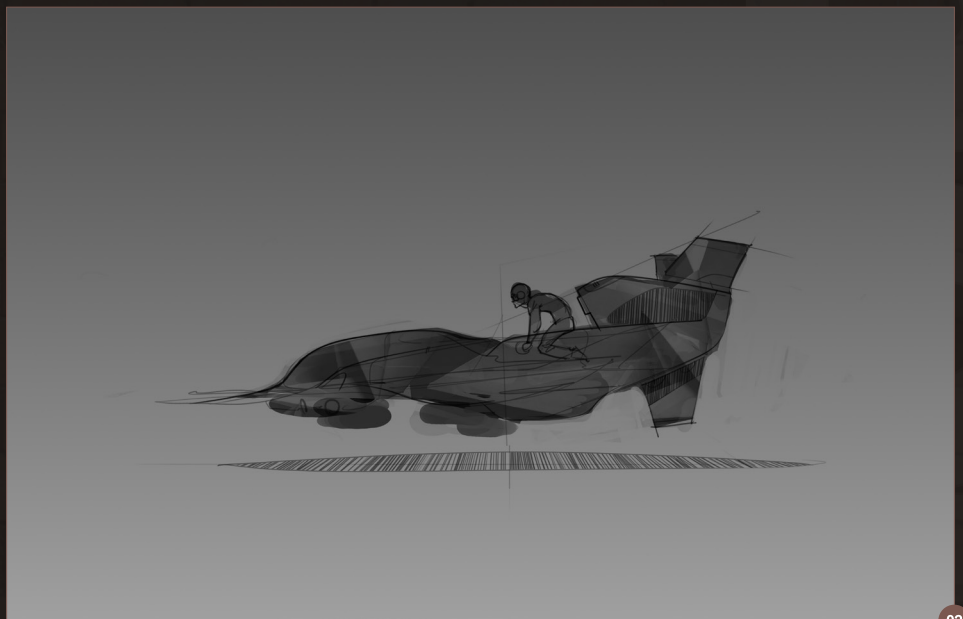
of your concept and therefore help to get it approved by your client (**Fig.03**).

Translation

The step I find most difficult is taking my scribbled sketch to the next level and nailing down the design. Because once you start cleaning up your scribble to turn it into something usable, you run the risk of losing the energy of your initial sketch. You start drawing

on top of your sketch, trying to fix its flaws and problems, and the next thing you know it looks nothing like your original sketch. All the initial appeal is gone and all that's left is rubbish.

There is always going to be a certain amount of disconnection between the first sketch and the final design. The trick is to find a good balance of creating a thoughtful 3D form, while staying true to the appeal of the original sketch.

As you can probably tell by the discrepancy between my sketch and my final result, I'm far from a master of this task. What usually works best for me is to use my sketch as a loose guide rather than a blueprint. I refer back to it until the design is nailed down, but I try not to be a slave to it.

When in doubt, I never hesitate to ask my design buddies for advice, as they usually know more than I do.

Shapes

When attempting to translate a rough sketch into a legit design, I was taught to deal with it in abstract shapes first. By this I mean that I try not to think about what it is I'm drawing, but only about the shape it has. The goal is to find a combination of strong graphic shapes that go well together.

At this stage I pretended I was designing a 2D composition of abstract graphics and ignored the fact that I was trying to design a vehicle (I would do the same with characters, props or environments) (**Fig.04**).

Volumes

After I was happy (or at least satisfied) with the graphic appearance of my design, I began to define the 3D shape by introducing a basic light source that I used to "sculpt" the volumes of my design.

Another invaluable tool to define the volumes is, again, graphics. Wrapping graphics across surfaces is a nice way to define its sections.

If you don't want to put permanent graphics on your design solely to describe its form, you can always cast a shadow across a shape to define its volume. This way you can describe the shape without altering the design of your object permanently (**Fig.05**).

Believability

An important step in selling your design is to convince the audience that your concept

could be reality. The crazier your concept, the harder you will have to work to make it look believable. To accomplish this, all you have to do to create a realistic image is include plenty of recognizable, functional and informative detailing. Small things like fuel caps, turning signals, exhausts, intakes, rivets, decals, instructions, material changes, etc., make all the difference (**Fig.06**).

The easiest thing to do is look at reference images of the type of vehicle you want to design and make a list of everything you see. In my case I was trying to design a futuristic hot rod. So I looked at pictures of existing hot rods and wrote everything down. Flame decals, chrome parts, candy paint, exposed engine parts and so on (**Fig.07**).

Fortunately modern technology such as the internet not only makes reference images accessible to everyone, but it also gives us the opportunity to use photography directly in our work.

I don't know anything about engines or cars in general and although it would be nice to know this, I thought I could get away with my ignorance by using a few photos of engines I found online and placing them on my rendering. Later I just painted back on top of the photos in an attempt to blend the photos into my work (**Fig.08**).

Approval

Sadly, all the work I'd done on this concept so far was only the very first step of the design

process. As of this point, my illustration was merely a pitch for a concept, waiting to become a fully fleshed-out design one day in the future. But before that can happen, this pitch-illustration has to be approved by the client, art director, production designer or whoever it is that you're answering to.

Now, in order to get the desired approval, you must spend some time on the presentation of the illustration to make sure the design is displayed at its full potential. Depending on whom you're presenting your concept to and what that person's background and taste is, you will have to pick a medium for your final illustration. Some art directors like looking at sketches and understand them well, others like the look of painterly illustrations. There are also a lot of people who prefer seeing photorealistic 3D renderings.

So it's a plus if you know who the person is that you're presenting to. Of course, having the

ability to present your concept in a way that will appeal to them can't hurt either, be it sculpting, painting, drawing, 3D modeling or tap-dancing.

In my case I decided to make it look a little painterly because many people seem to respond to that hand-crafted quality. But whichever route you go, just make sure it's badass at the end (**Fig.09**).

Orthographic

Let's just imagine that a client approved my concept; this is where the tedious part begins. Luckily I was wise enough to paint my illustration pretty much in side view. This way I was already done with one of the three orthographic views. I just needed to trace it with some line work and then project the important "landmarks" of the design over to the top view. I left the front view
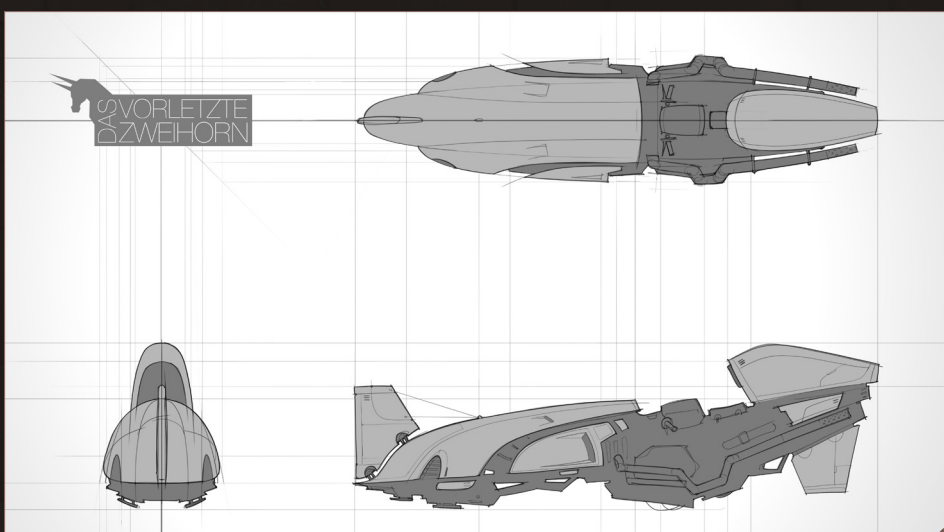
for last because in this particular example it was the least descriptive view (**Fig.10**).

Depending on who you work for you might have the option of building a basic 3D proxy model instead of drawing the orthographic views. It all depends on the client, your personal abilities and preferences.
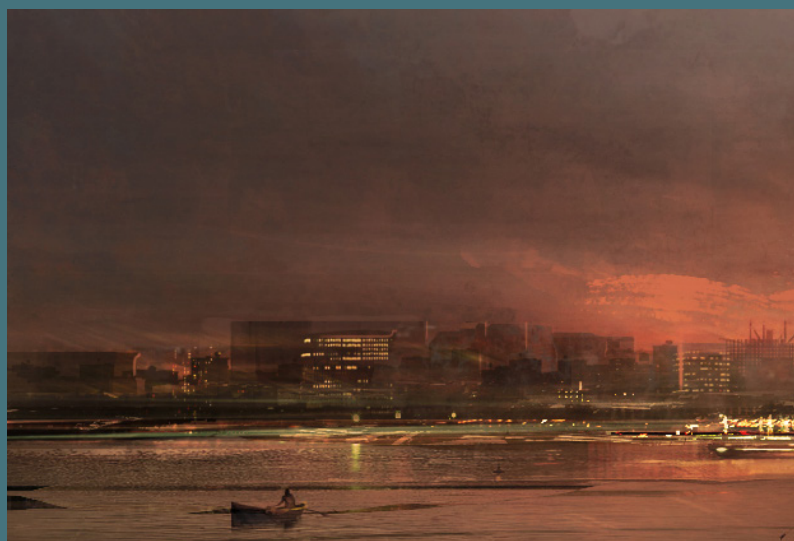
Thank you for reading!

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DESIGNING
NEW WORLDS

Games and films are made up of many different features such as characters, environments and vehicles, and it is important that all these elements work together to demonstrate a consistent visual language and therefore create a believable environment and society to engage the audience. In this series our artists will take a comprehensive look at creating a new world from a concept perspective, and investigate the processes and techniques that can be used to create all the major features of a game or film.

Chapter 02 – City/Residential Architecture

Software Used: Photoshop

The Introduction

The focus of this tutorial will be on creating a residential landscape for this fledgling world. As you may recall, we are attempting to develop a world where the time is similar to our present day, but where a Mongol empire based on the hordes of Genghis Khan now dominates the world.

This tutorial will examine how mood and atmosphere are used to help create a narrative. Furthermore, the use of light will be explored and we shall look at how it can be harnessed to introduce greater interest and drama in your artwork. Whilst composition is a critical element, this is something that will be explored in later tutorials. With this particular image I plan to incorporate the use of "light textures" in the painting to explore these ideas.

The Concept

What would this fictional world look like? How are the cities or urban areas to be represented?

When beginning to develop the image, the first step is to do a bit of research. I have spoken about this to some degree in the previous chapter; to avoid repetition, I won't cover the same ground,

although it remains a critical part of my process and it's a point worth reinforcing.

The actual idea for the image, as one would expect, is critical. It's easy to just start painting, but from my experience you just end up moving pixels from one side of your canvas to the other. I like to have at least some kind of image in my head, quite literally, before I start painting. Research allows me to form this mental image in my head and gives me some kind of direction when I begin to paint. This is particularly important when you're on the job and have specific goals with tight deadlines, but then again sometimes things just roll.

The Start

Let's start with the idea. In this case I envision a relatively stark city, over-shadowed by a much larger structure. So I have the basic image, but no real idea about the palette or even the composition.

With this basic premise in mind, simple shapes are used to get the image working (**Fig.01**).

The idea is to achieve a kind of harmony with shapes. Some prefer to simply use lines (thumbnails), therefore being able to explore ideas with greater speed. This makes sense, as speed or the ability to flow through ideas quickly helps to stimulate the mind and excite you about the image. Though as I have a pretty clear idea I jump a step and go straight into shapes and rough painting (**Fig.02**).

The Palette

A painting teacher once told me that a painting only really begins once the whole canvas is covered. There is much truth in that. Once the elements are in place you are able to mould and refine the image. With our picture, the basic structure has been established with simple shapes. Whilst very

basic, it allows us to explore other issues like the palette.

The creation of anything is a process that happens over time. Creating clear moods within an artwork is an important step in becoming familiar and engaged with any universe that is developed. Correspondingly, the process of establishing the palette is a key development within the image.

The color range and tonal harmony of an artwork helps to create the mood and drama. By defining the mood it allows the viewer's mind to wander and explore the concept further, therefore allowing a greater depth of understanding of the world being created.

With a landscape, for the most part, the palette is established with the sky. It's where you will start to introduce mood and drama into your image. So spending sometime exploring a variety of skies is always fruitful. I am not so much of a purist as I once was, so the use of photos, augmented with painting, is a fast and fun way to generate a background sky (**Fig.03**). This is the first step in creating your palette.

A key thing to remember and put into play is the concept of contrast. In the sky that I am painting I hope to maintain interplay between cold and warm color, hard and soft edges, high frequency texture and simple paint strokes, etc (**Fig.04**).

Interest within the image is created this way, not including composition, which plays a fundamental role in itself. Using references is important here. Whether it is studying photos or even staring into the sky, it's critical to observe the shapes, pattern and harmonies that we see in the sky.

The Light

The light is where the real drama comes into play; specifically it is how you nurture and direct the drama within your work. The color palette and the way you direct the light in your image will determine the mood, as well as granting you scale and depth; two critical features in any landscape

painting. It should be said that it is difficult to separate your palette from the light; they are one and the same thing, but for the sake of the explaining the process, the palette and light shall be treated as separate.

In this particular work I want a subdued feel and a late afternoon palette, yet I want to emphasize the scale and depth in the work. Here the main light source is placed behind the key structure; that is to say the image is going to be back-lit. I have already explored options and have finally decided upon a look (**Fig.05**).

As you can see, I have already placed a low sitting sun just above the horizon. This is where you would use your references (or watch a sunset) to study the characteristics of this particular set of lighting conditions.

It should be made clear that the light you see with your eyes and light you see through a lens (photos, cameras, movie, etc.,) is quite different. Clearly there is a lot of science and a lot of very important

data here, most of which I know nothing about, but it is important to recognize the difference.

My layman's understanding is thus. You see what you see and it's a natural process, simply because you see it. When you see a photo or movie, the image is being processed by a secondary eye. This lens is an artifice and introduces more variables into your perception of the image (e.g., noise, flaring, color aberration, lens distortion). This is important to recognize as they represent different forms of light as perceived by the viewer, one more natural, the other more filmic.

In the current image I am going to incorporate filmic light or "Hollywood light". For the most part, filmic light is over the top, more dramatic and somewhat fantastical in nature, though nevertheless still grounded in the real world. The first step is to establish which direction the light is coming from (**Fig.06**).

We can see that the light should be coming towards us. We should arm ourselves with relevant references to gain an understanding of what these lighting conditions look like, and then proceed to paint the light in.

The Render

The color of the light is what is going to determine the natural palette, hence my earlier statement that the light and palette are hard to differentiate. The color of the light is warm, so we know that the shadow colors are going to be cool (**Fig.07**). This is the basic premise that is going to guide our render. Where we think the light of the sun is going to hit an object, it's going to be warm and the corresponding shadow shall be cool.

Furthermore we also know that the greatest point of contrast will be where the light meets the shadow, or simply put, where planes of differing value meet. Clearly these rules are fluid and are dependent on the nature of the shape to be rendered and the complexity required. For instance, the level of textural intensity in conjunction with the color and its respective value, add further complexity to our image (**Fig.08**).

We add depth to our image via atmospheric perspective. This is how we simulate both depth and distance (a lot of this would be considered in the actual composition, but it's not the focus of this particular tutorial).

The idea is that atmosphere is present between you and the object and the more distance there is, the more atmosphere. This also applies to scale – the larger the object, the more atmosphere. The technique is to paint in the atmosphere with a

soft brush. By introducing your background color in front of your buildings (in this case the central building) you are "pushing" it back into the distance. The same technique also applies to suggesting the size of the image (**Fig.09**).

Once we are in a position where we feel there is sufficient detail and content in the image, we can begin to play with the introduction of "light textures". The initial step is to select images that will provide the lights for our building (**Fig.10**).

warm light

cool shadow

Atmosphere colour place in front of building

Atmosphere colour

The layer is set to screen and "crunched" via your levels to only reveal the light values or light information.
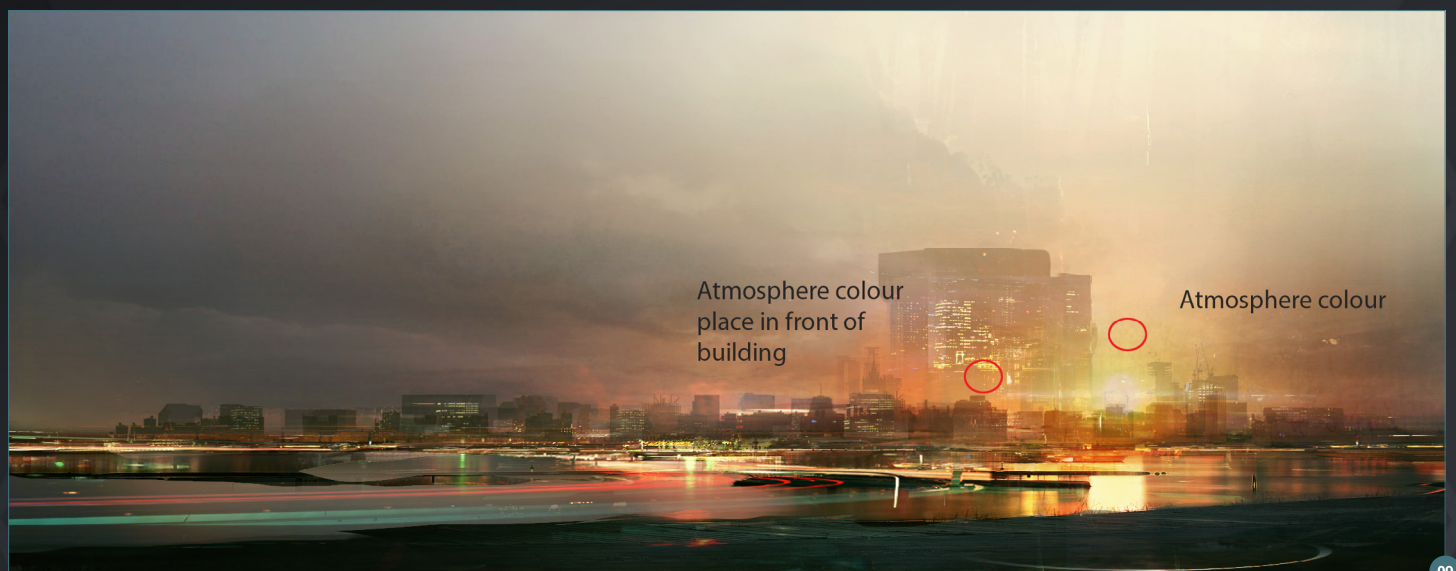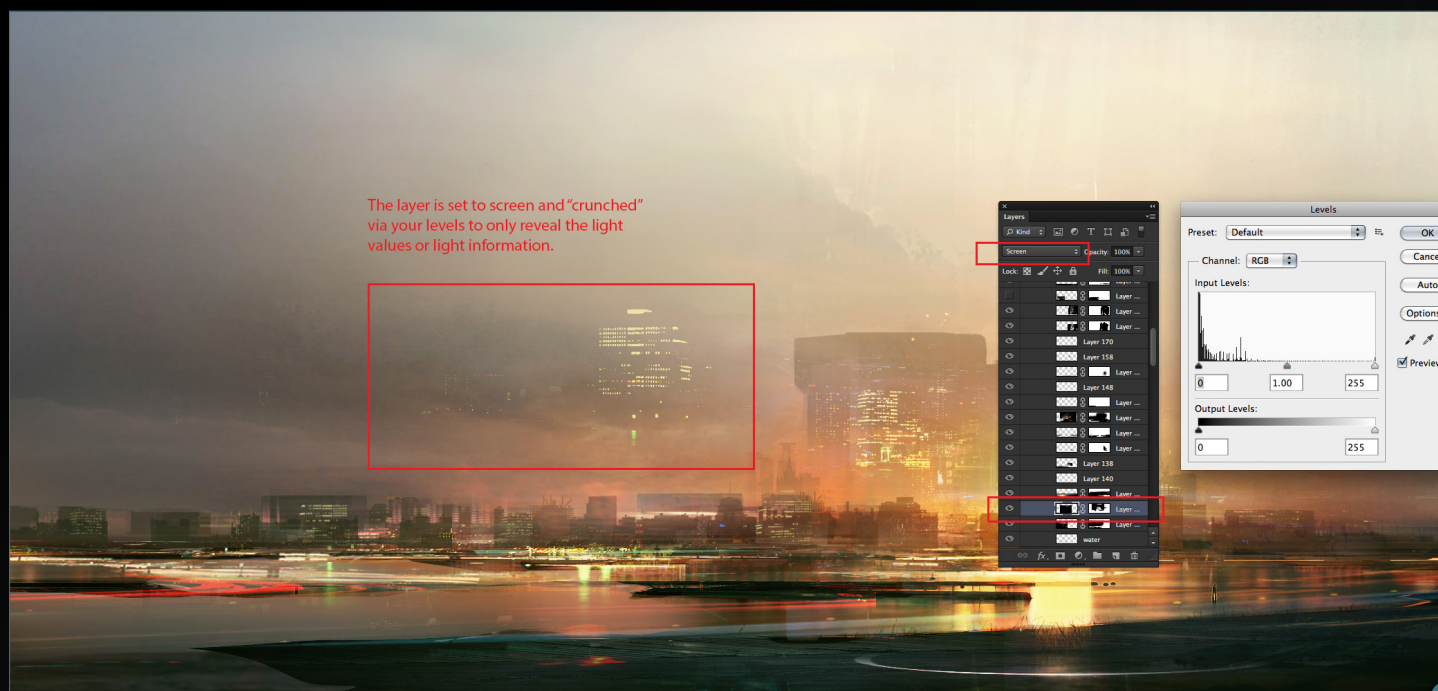
This is done by simply choosing photos of a city at night, preferably with a straight-on perspective. Select Screen in the Layer mode dropdown menu and adjust the contrast of the same Screen layer with either your Curves or Levels. Essentially you want to retain the light detail and get rid of the black or dark values.

Then place the texture in the chosen location. This technique can be applied to all aspects of city lights, traffic, office lights, etc. It's important to experiment with the placement and the photos used, as it can have many serendipitous results!

Similar techniques can be used to introduce lens aberration and artifices into your image. The process is as follows: select photos that display said effects, and simply place them into your image and explore the various effect that different layer modes have. The most useful will generally be Soft Light, Overlay and Screen. It should be remembered that the goal is to extract the light information and harmonize it with your image.

Integration is the key; textures should not overpower the overall picture. The introduction of "light textures" should not be used to compensate for what could be lacking in the image. It's simply a tool to add more flavor to your work.

Finally after all your labors, it's good to leave the image to rest overnight and review it the next day. If you're happy with it after a good night's rest, then you know it's finished (**Fig.11**).

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The
SEAPORT

A step by step guide to creating a detailed scene in Photoshop

A two part tutorial in which our talented artist demonstrates techniques and processes to paint and form the core structure to building a detailed scene.

Chapter 2 – Color and Brush Management

Software Used: Photoshop

To address a scene containing a lot of detail and information, you need to have an order in which to work in and above all, patience. For this tutorial I was commissioned to draw a seaport – an original place, with an invented civilization – that showed different situations, crane movements, people, vehicles; many elements interacting with each other. To deal with something of this magnitude, with so many things to draw in the same composition, you have to plan in advance.

This tutorial will explain how to draw a complex scenario step-by-step. I'll talk about how ideas arise, what the sources of inspiration are, how to work with perspective and composition, digital painting techniques, brush management and adding final details. Although almost all these issues can be found in art books or manual drawing, I'll show different techniques and ways to address a drawing. The goal is that the tutorial should serve primarily as a guide for those artists who are getting started and need some order with which to address their projects.

Color

For illustrators, painting a picture is often the hardest part of the work, as they are afraid of ruining the drawing when coloring it. I always say that the easiest thing is to learn how to color and the most important thing is to learn how to draw. Each element in nature has a default color, which I will name "local". Apples are red, trees are green and brown, and the sky is blue (**Fig.01**).

When painting an object, we must take into account its local color and add to it the "base" or "environment" color. This base color will interfere with the object's local color, producing new mixes that will not only change it, but help to enrich and integrate the object into the environment. Therefore, even though the apple
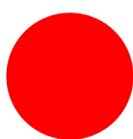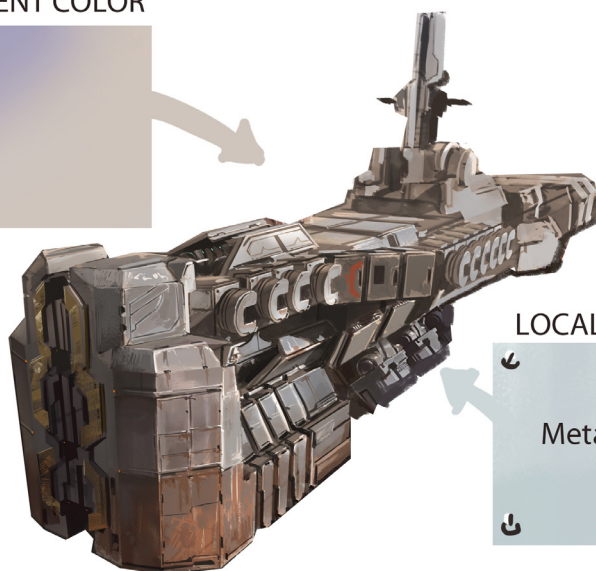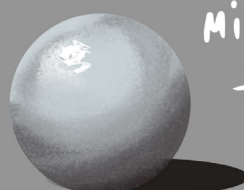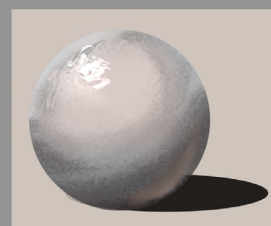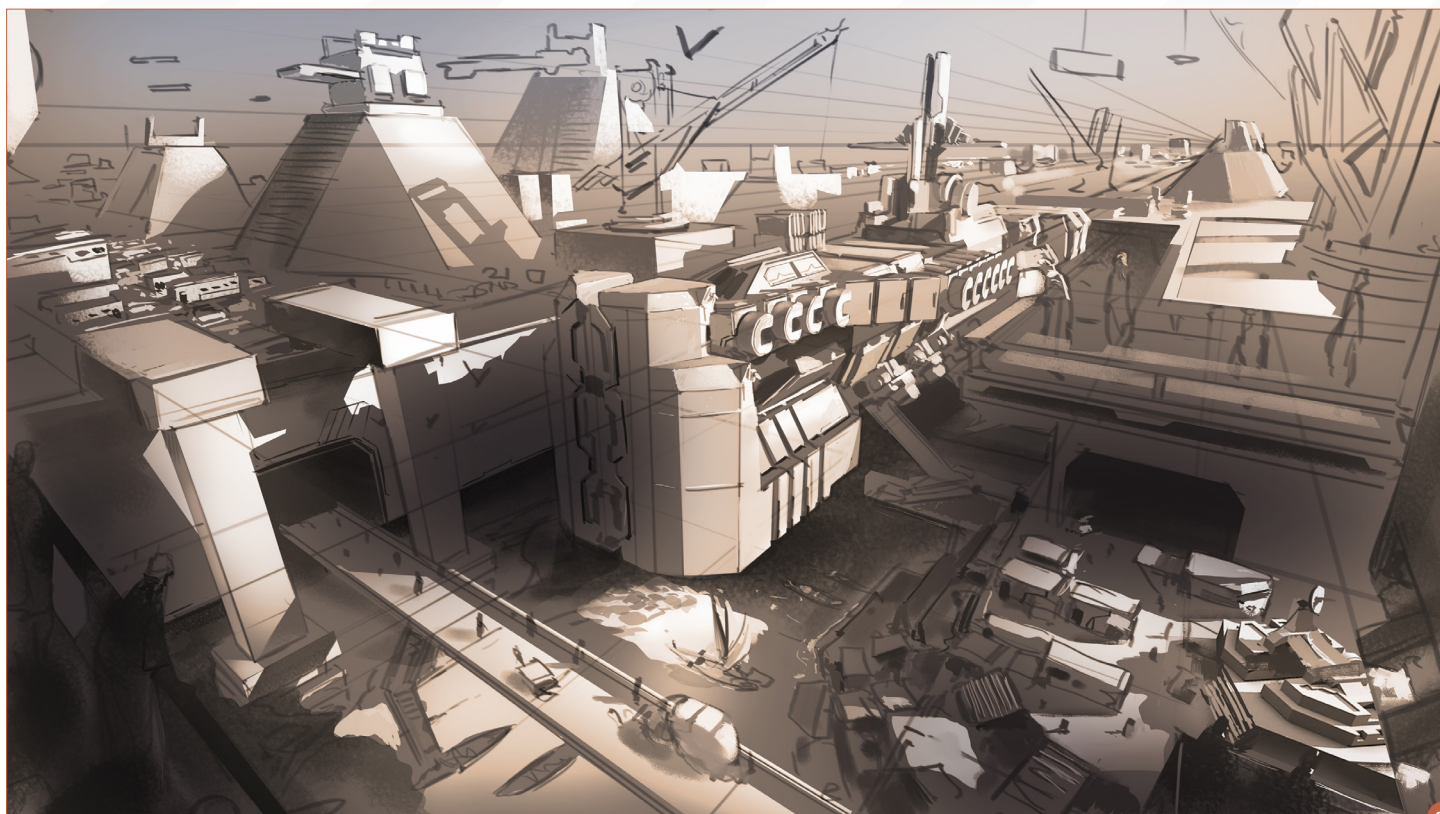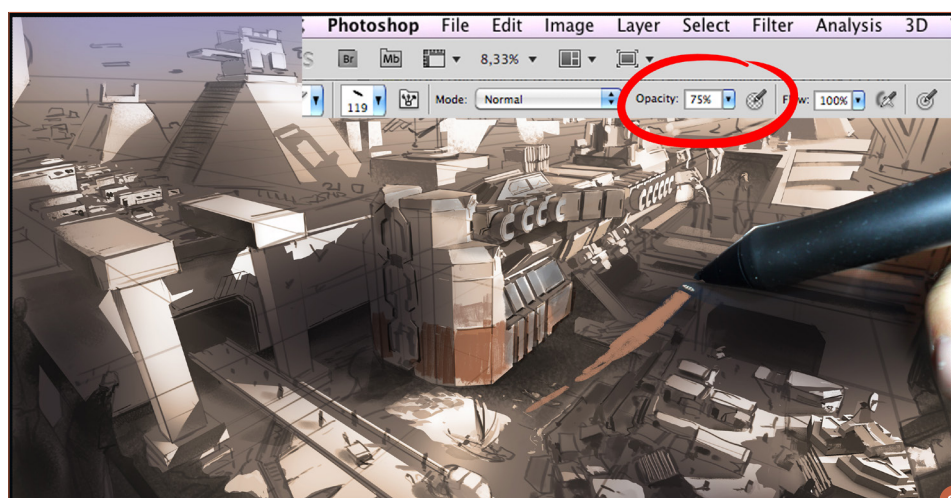
is red, it can also be green, purple, yellow and orange in turn (**Fig.02**).

To set the color, I took a photograph as a source of inspiration, from which I extracted the base color of my drawing. Once I had more or less defined the light and shadow in black and white, I created a new layer. In Overlay mode, I painted the entire canvas orange, as well as adding dark brown shadows to limit areas and generate contrast. I mutated the tones to a gray color by reducing the color intensity setting on the layer to an opacity of 78% (**Fig.03**).

Once I finished the base color in a new layer, I started painting the whole scene in Normal mode. Using only my brush, with an opacity setting of 75%, I started in the center of the scene and began to work on the color of the ship (**Fig.04**).

I decided to use a blue-gray color, as the spacecraft was to be made out of shiny metal. For the used rusted pieces, orange was better. By mixing these colors (orange with the blue-gray shiny metal) I got the desired effect (**Fig.05**).

Unlike many digital artists I usually prefer to add color, as if it were a traditional painting. What I do is take the color I want from the color palette and apply it directly onto the canvas without using any special filter or effect to
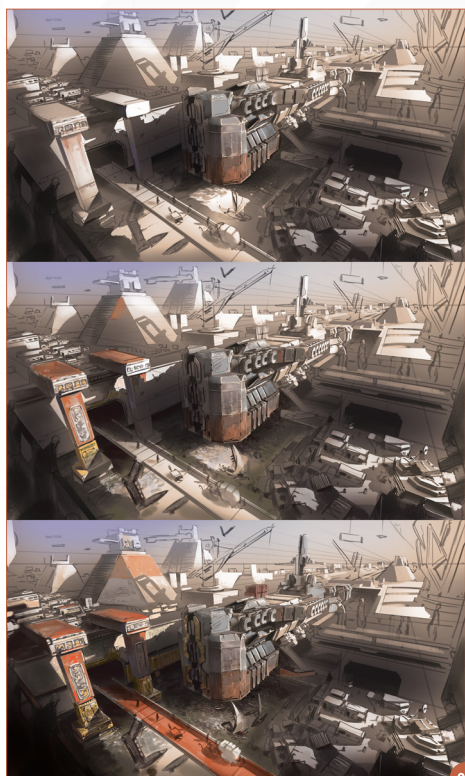
keep the background pattern. In short, I cover the previous stage of the drawing with color that resembles oil paint, because it makes the picture look like a traditional painting. I enjoy thinking about the colors I should use and how to combine them (**Fig.06**).

To save working time, we can also use textures taken from photos, but when using them we must be careful to maintain the aesthetic unity of the whole work. The important thing is not to show that there is a photo and that with this action, we have improved the quality of our work (**Fig.07**).

Gradually an image full of color and detail will appear. It is important to keep color tones. Using the base color we should try different colors, taking care that they do not differ too much from the rest, unless the composition or the scene should require it.

As the composition of the scene contains many elements, we should play a lot with the issue of distance and contrast to differentiate and limit their importance in the composition. Objects that are close are more saturated in color and have

contrast   distance
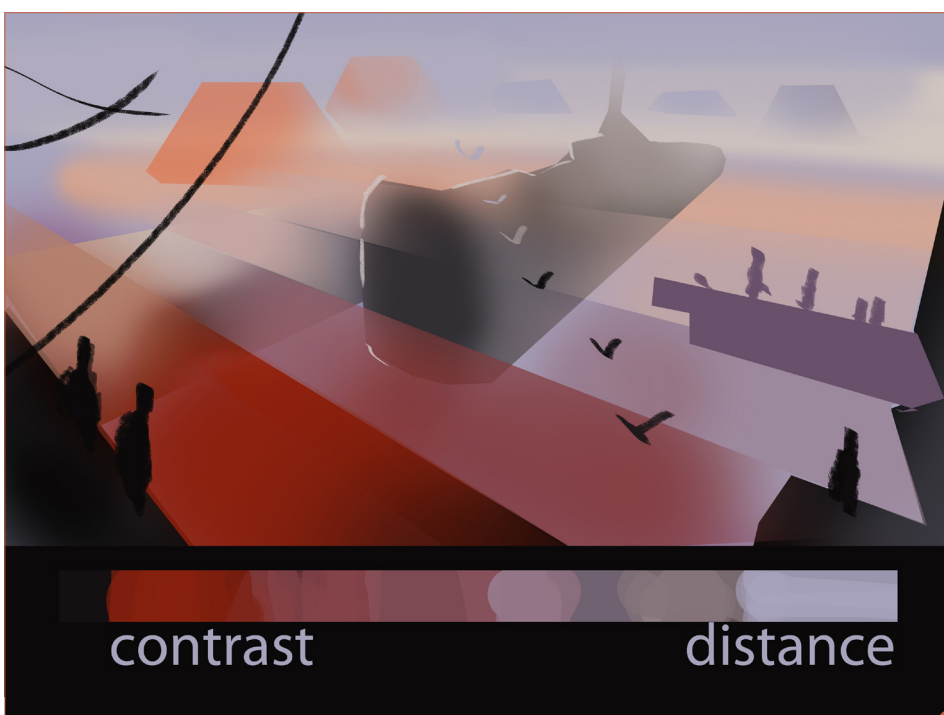
more contrast. Objects that are farther away are fainter and more gray (**Fig.08**).

Digital Painting

For better handling of the color and to create halftones for our digital painting, use the Color Picker + Alt. Once we have established the basis of color, in this case the gray blue metal that covers the ship, we pick up the same color with the Eyedropper tool. By using the brush with the opacity at 70%, we will be able to do the halftone color base, while we add new colors and mix them with that basic color (**Fig.09**).

There are very good programs that emulate a color's assembly process and its mixture, as if we were working with pigments.

My recommendation is to work with a good digital tablet that has high sensitivity in the tip and, at the same time, set the brush properly.

Brush Management

There are several ways to improve work by creating your own brushes, intelligently using their settings and not abusing the resources.

Early on in the painting process, many digital artists typically use their brush with very little

color picker

color base   color medium   new color   new color

BRUSH 70% OPACITY

09

100% opacity

GOOD DEFINITION

10

20% opacity

GHOST

BAD DEFINITION

11

BRUSH CONFIGURATION

OPACITY 100%
-Strong lines
-texture effect
-good definition

OPACITY 20%
-Final detail
-remove traces
-Final detail

12

BRUSH

BRUSH

BRUSH

BRUSH WITH TEXTURE

13
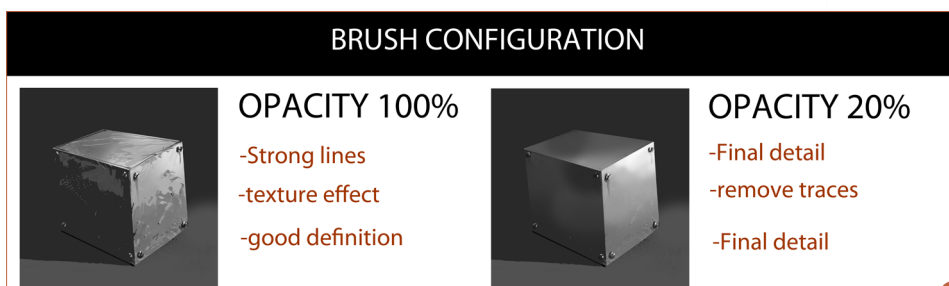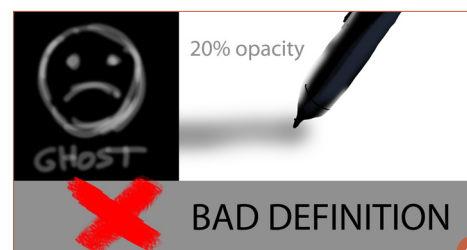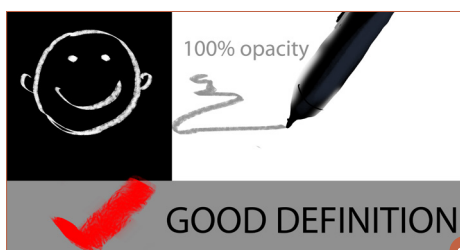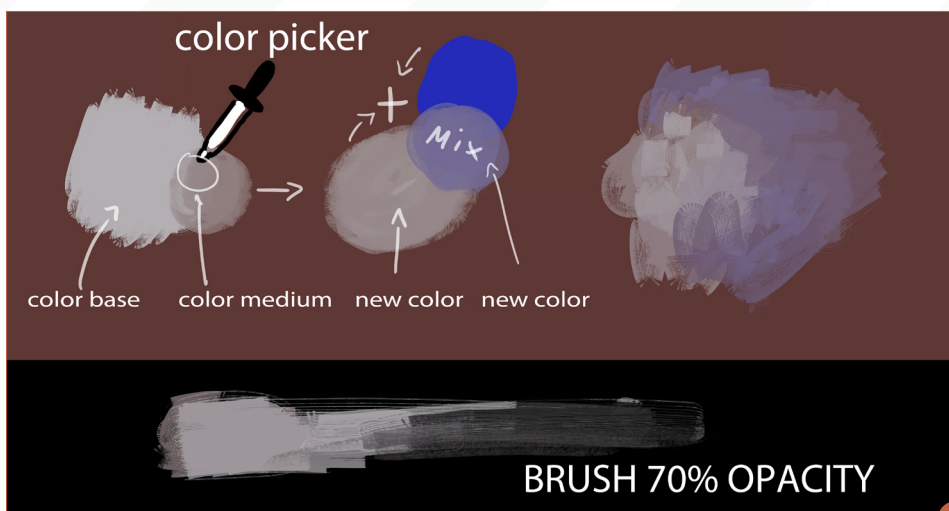
opacity, thinking that in this way they should be able to achieve a more realistic and photographic result in their work. However, the results obtained tend to be not very detailed pictures with a ghostly or blurred effect (**Fig.10 – 11**).

This process is just the reverse. We start working with a harder brush (100% opacity) and finally, if you want a more realistic treatment, you may soften certain parts of the drawing's strokes by using a softer brush (20% opacity) (**Fig.12**).

The more defined the hard shadows and lights are, the more realistic our work will look. Another way to achieve a good finish is to use textured brushes with specific shapes to save working time (**Fig.13**).

How an artist uses a brush is part of their personality and the stroke style often reveals who the owner of the work is. I recommend preparing a unique set of brushes of your own and designing your personal style, trying not to repeat the same resource in the same work.

To Tell a Story

For the image to make sense and be interesting, it is better that it tells a story and the composition of the illustration's elements reinforces this concept. My younger brother, who also draws, is a fan of the ancient astronauts theory and gave me ideas for this scene. I found the topic interesting, so I tried to have something similar in my illustration.

To the left there are alien emperors watching the loading and unloading of their mother ship; on
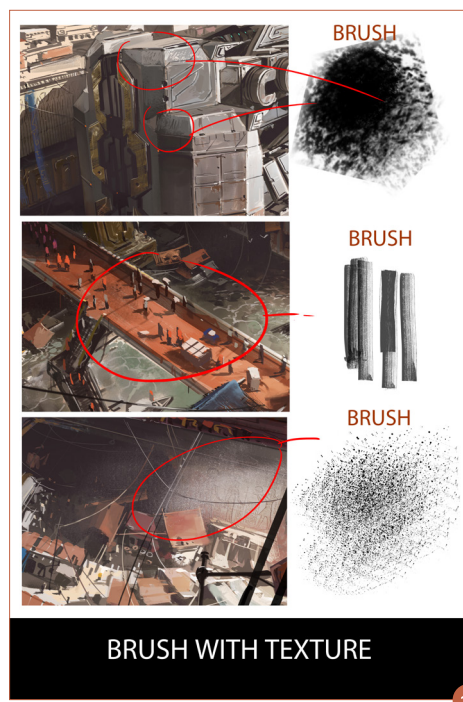
1-Emperador
2-Noble
3-Village
4-Aztec pyramids

the other balconies to the right, there is part of the nobility. Finally, at the bottom of the picture I put the poorest people, their houses and fishing boats. All these elements lead the eye towards the center of the ship. On the one hand they add information and, on the other, they simplify the composition (**Fig.14**).

Intelligent Detailing

Finally, to display the image better, I recommend detailing the most important issues. What would be the most important? What we want to show, what summarizes the idea or what generates the greatest impact from afar. From this stage I began to work zoomed in to 50 or 70 percent, taking regular intervals to see the whole picture to avoid getting lost in the immensity of the details (**Fig.15**).

To achieve a good end result many things should be considered, especially maintaining

order and being aware of every step you take. In a piece of this complexity it is necessary to take breaks to criticize the picture and look for errors.

It is important to study and practice a lot, because this allows us to eventually be the

master of our work. It also gives us more creative freedom and the opportunity to develop our talents to the fullest.

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Custom Brushes for Characters

Chapter 0.6

A custom brush can add that special texture or help speed up your workflow. You can use a combination of custom brushes to quickly add cracks, dirt and scratches to textures or images, or use them to paint an underlying texture such as skin, cloth, leather and metal to a section of a painting. In this tutorial series our artists will show us how to create different custom brushes to texture a character. This will involve them starting with a basic un-textured character that they have designed, and then demonstrating how to create brushes to add areas of texture and detail.

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

- Free Brushes

Chapter 06 – Period Drama Girl

Software Used: Photoshop

Custom brushes have become a very popular subject over the years, due to the diversity of digital artists as well as the popularity of speed painting. Very common questions that professional artists hear are things like "what brushes do you use?" And "can I see your brushes?" But the question that should be asked is: "why do you use the brushes that you use?"

For this demonstration, I will be painting a female portrait and will be explaining how I make the custom brushes, as well as why I am using them. When I create brushes I usually think of the multiple purposes each brush can have. A brush for rocks could be used to paint fabric and vice versa; it just depends on how you use it. You'll see later on how I will re-use brushes in the demo.

For people who are new to creating brushes, the steps are pretty straight forward. First, create a black shape or texture on a white or transparent background. Then select the shape with the Lasso or Marquee tool, go to Edit > Define Brush Preset, and that's it. All you need to do now is find the new brush you created at the bottom of your brush list and modify it accordingly.
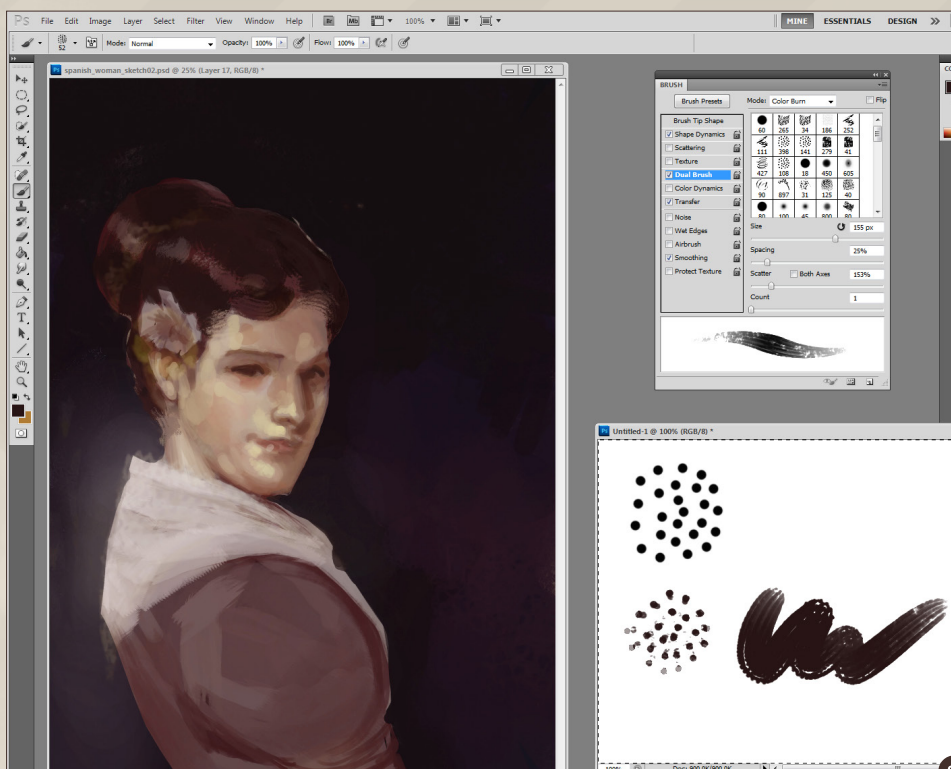
I start this piece by using a basic round Photoshop brush because it is a responsive and simple brush. I also do the sketch monochromatically and will be adding color later for the sake of the demo. I don't spend a lot of time with the sketch because I like it when my paintings evolve (**Fig.01**).

I then use a custom-shaped brush to add a little texture and some edge variety to the sketch, so it doesn't end up feeling too digital. Creating a custom brush is a fairly straight forward process and with practice can become second nature, so you can change and manipulate brushes on the fly.

To create the brush seen in **Fig.02**, I use a Lasso tool to create an interesting shape and then erase some of it to add variety. I have Spacing set to 11%, Shape Dynamics on, Texture on, and Transfer on (all set to Pressure Sensitivity). You can do almost any random shape and make it work, as long as you play around with the brush settings.

If you are having trouble coming up with shapes that work, try looking at natural media brushes and tools, and try to come up with ways of translating that into a Photoshop brush. You can also use photos as brushes by grabbing an image, making it black and white, then lassoing parts of the photo that you think might be useful.

I start to add color to the portrait by creating an Overlay layer and blocking in large shapes of color, and then using a Normal layer on top to adjust the colors accordingly (**Fig.03**). I use a cooler yellow against warmer shadows to emphasis some of the forms in the face.
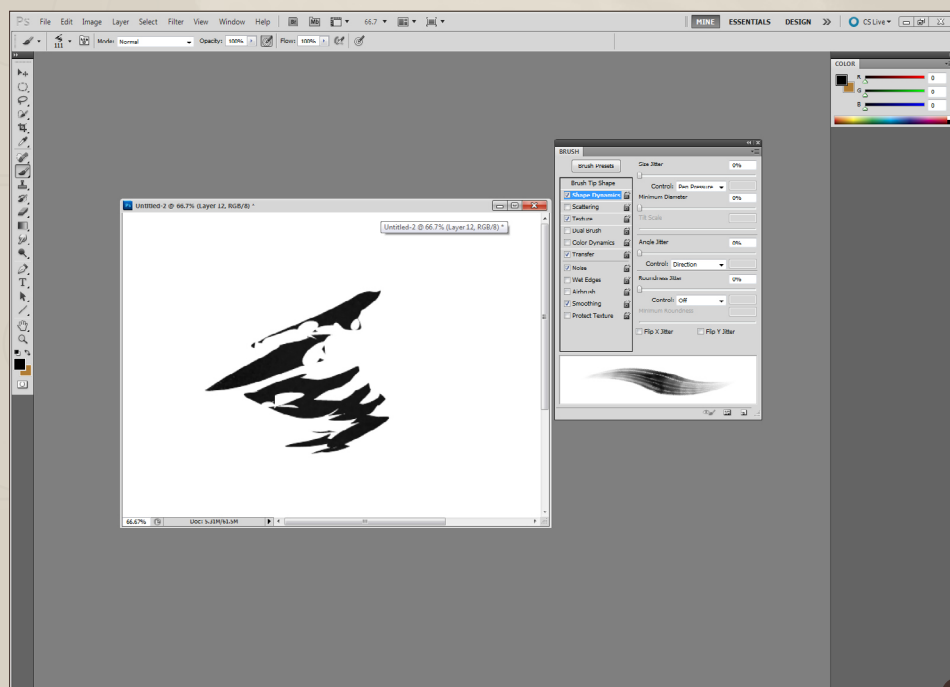
When I start to detail the hair, I want a large streaky brush that resembles a natural brush. I start by creating a pattern of dots with a round brush and then add Shape Dynamics, Dual Brush and Transfer in the brush options (**Fig.04**).

The three items I've circled in Dual Brush are the modifiers you will be using most of the time when using Dual Brush. When creating custom brushes with textures, the Dual Brush is very important. It can add an almost random (natural) quality to your custom brushes and really come up with some awesome variances. I can spend a lot of time creating brushes that try to mimic natural media, but sometimes it just doesn't work because at the end of the day it's still digital trying to be natural.

As you can see in **Fig.05**, I continue to refine the forms in her face and hair. I also start flushing out her clothing. For these steps I go back and forth between the two brushes shown, while adjusting the brushes as needed. I also adjust some of the anatomy, as well as the surfacing in her face to get the look I want (which I'll probably settle on much later).
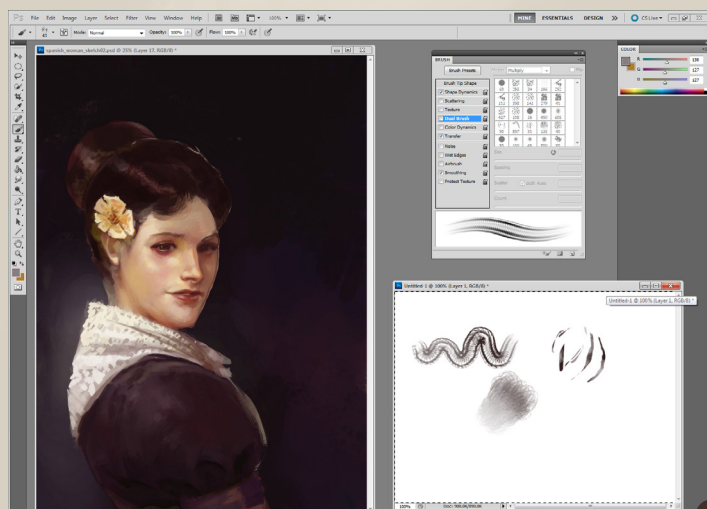
In **Fig.06** I want to add in some interior shapes and colors. For that I go with a rectangular block-in brush because it resembles laying in thick, flat colors. When I use brushes like this I think of what it's like painting with a house paint brush, palette knife or flat sponge. For this example I am thinking of a sponge-like flat brush and like a sponge it is textured, because I
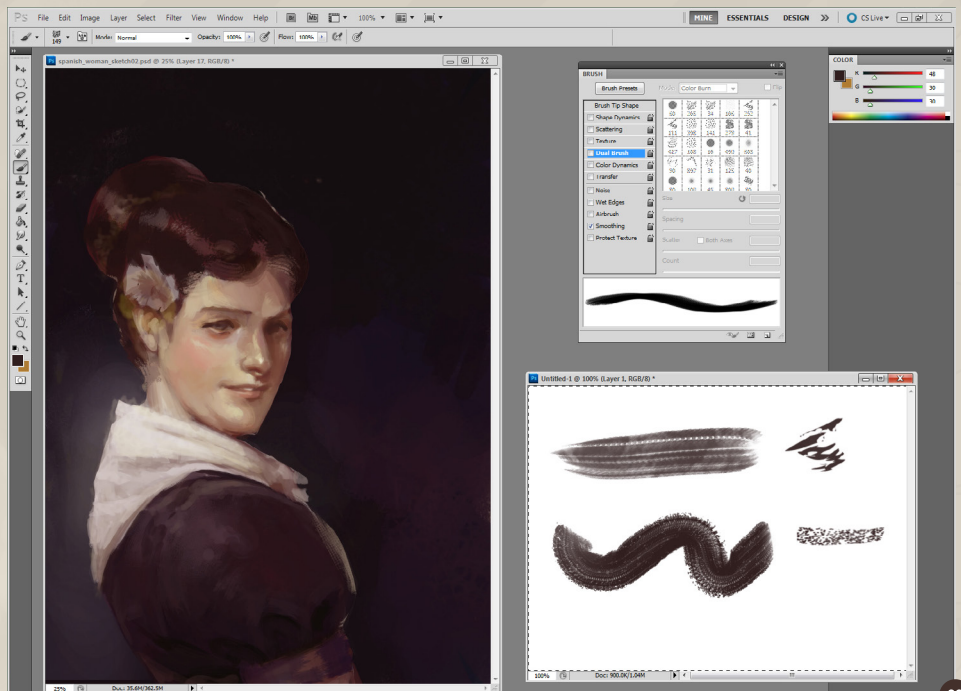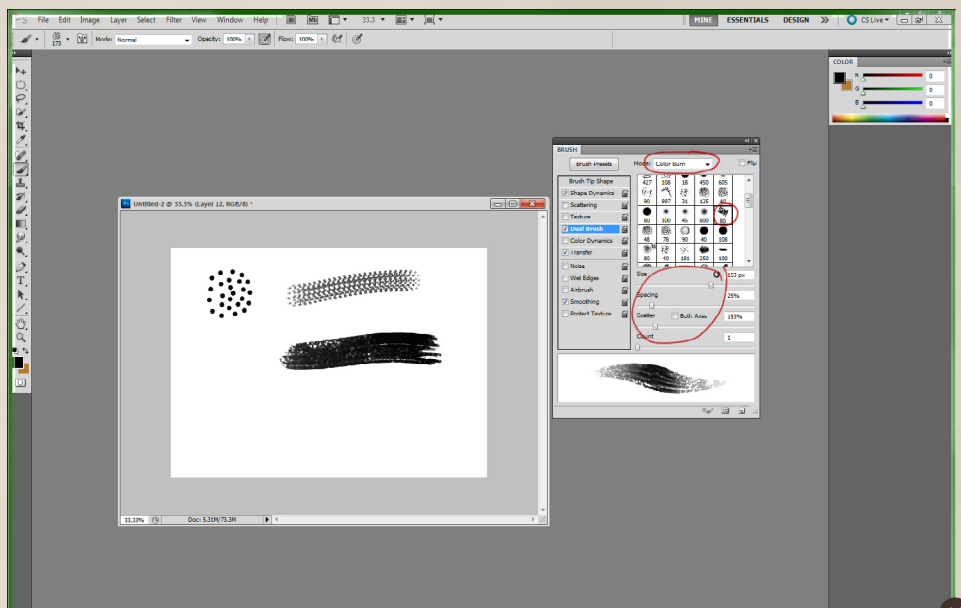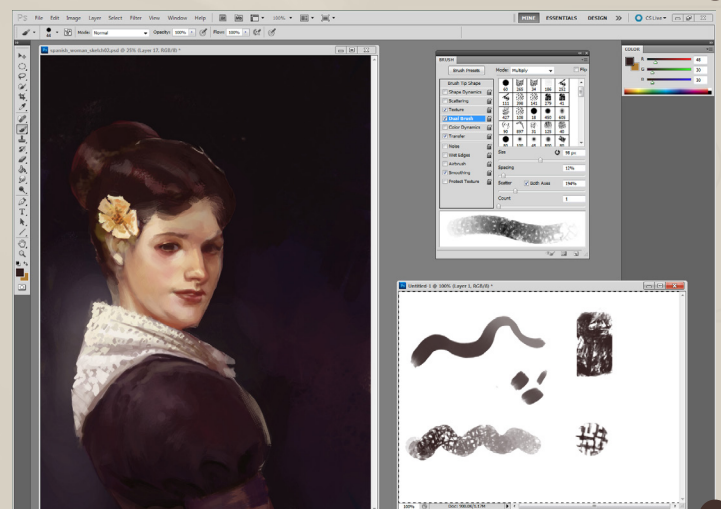
still want texture variety even if it's only a little apparent.

When I start to soften the textures in certain areas I tend to stay with a rough, streaky brush (**Fig.07**) because it gives the appearance of a smooth surface without losing the painterly roughness. This brush can be reused countless times because of the interesting shapes and textures it creates with minimal changes. You can also use an airbrush or the Smudge tool to soften the edges and forms, which are just as good, but it's up to you (**Fig.08**).

I decide I don't like how the character is working out, so I change it. I give her a little more "edge" and also add more character in her face by refining the shapes. Using the round brush means I have a lot of control and it is also very fast at refining the silhouette. I use the round brush a lot, but I always change it in the
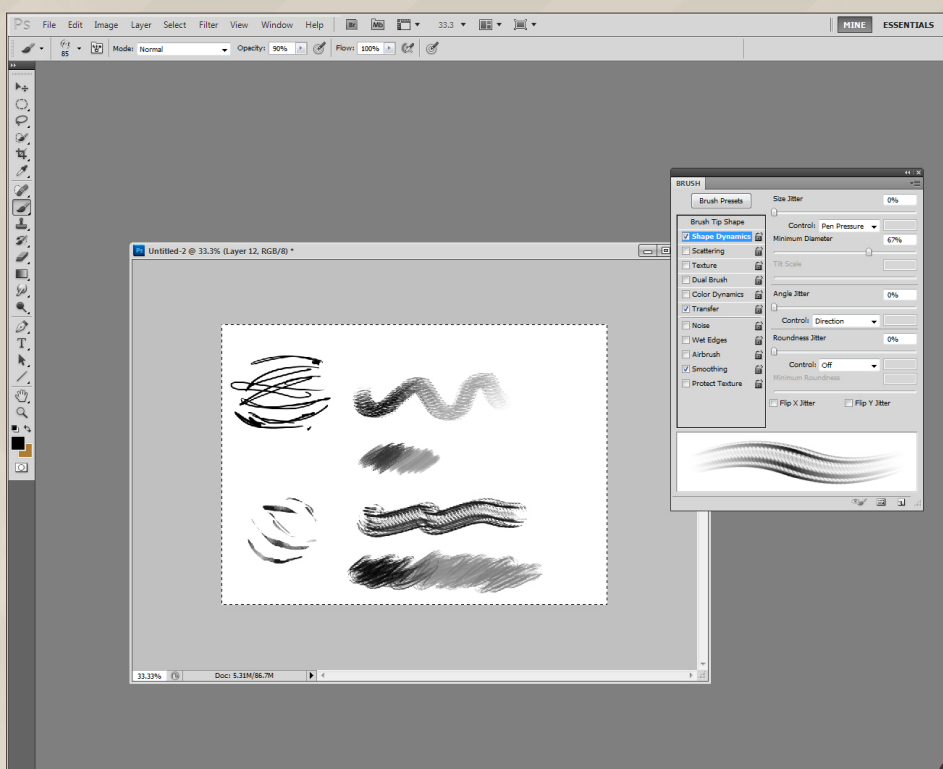

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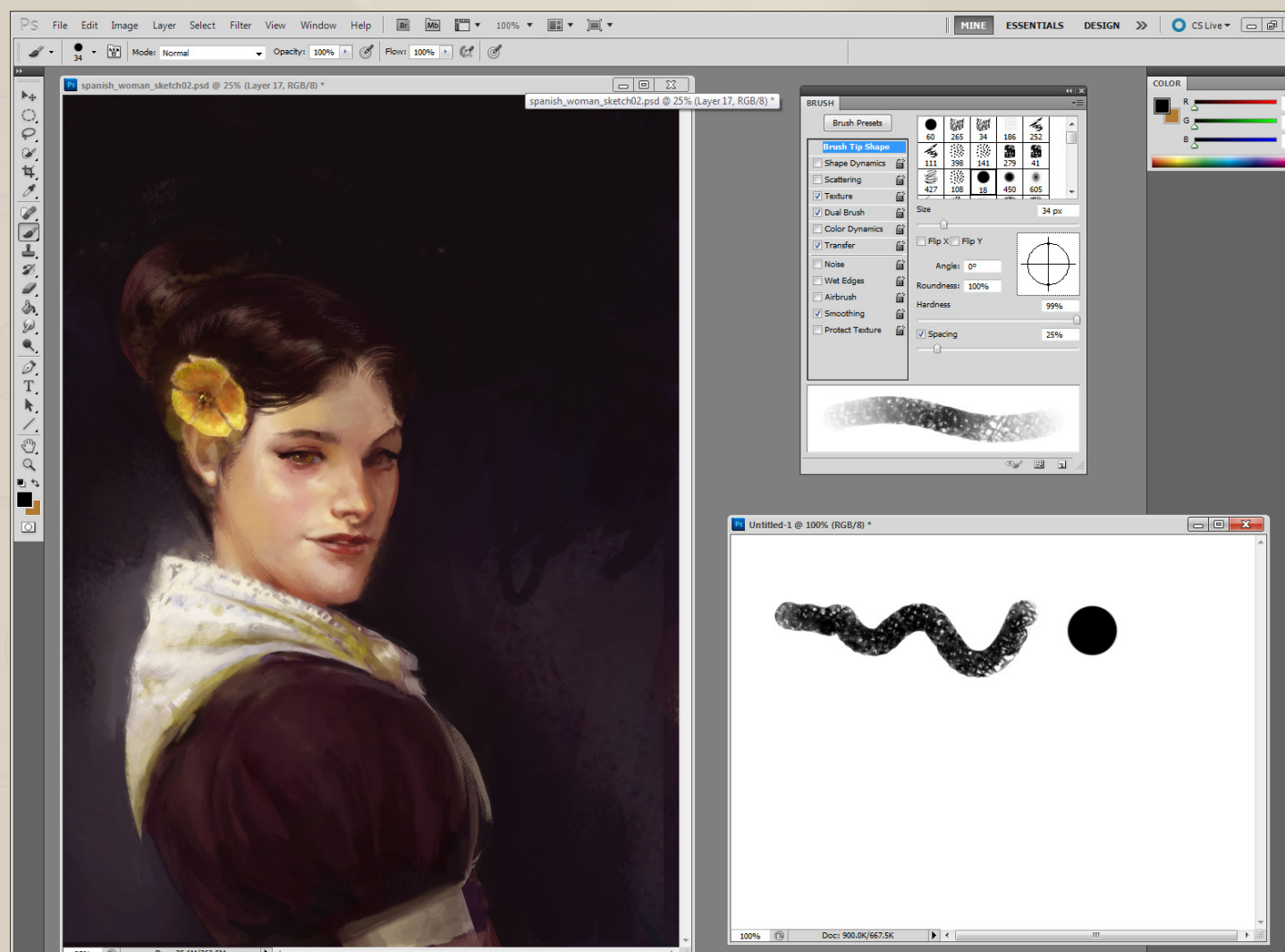
08

moment, whether it's changing the texture, Dual Brush or Spacing; it's a very versatile brush.

Round brushes are good from start to finish because they are responsive and have lots of variety. Also, if they are textured properly then they can even prevent an image from looking too digital. In **Fig.09** I show only a few choices of a vast amount of possibilities with the round brush.

As seen in **Fig.10**, you can miss even the most obvious issues, like the fact that her ears are way too high and the top of head is getting lost. I adjust her ear by lassoing it, then I Copy Merge it on top and reposition it. I also add white lace in her hair to stop the top of her head from getting lost.

I smooth out some rougher areas and some edges that are too sharp. At this point of the painting I am constantly flipping and hiding layers to see if the edits I'm making are working or not. I am fairly happy with the outcome here and call it done.

+ Transfer

+shape dynamics

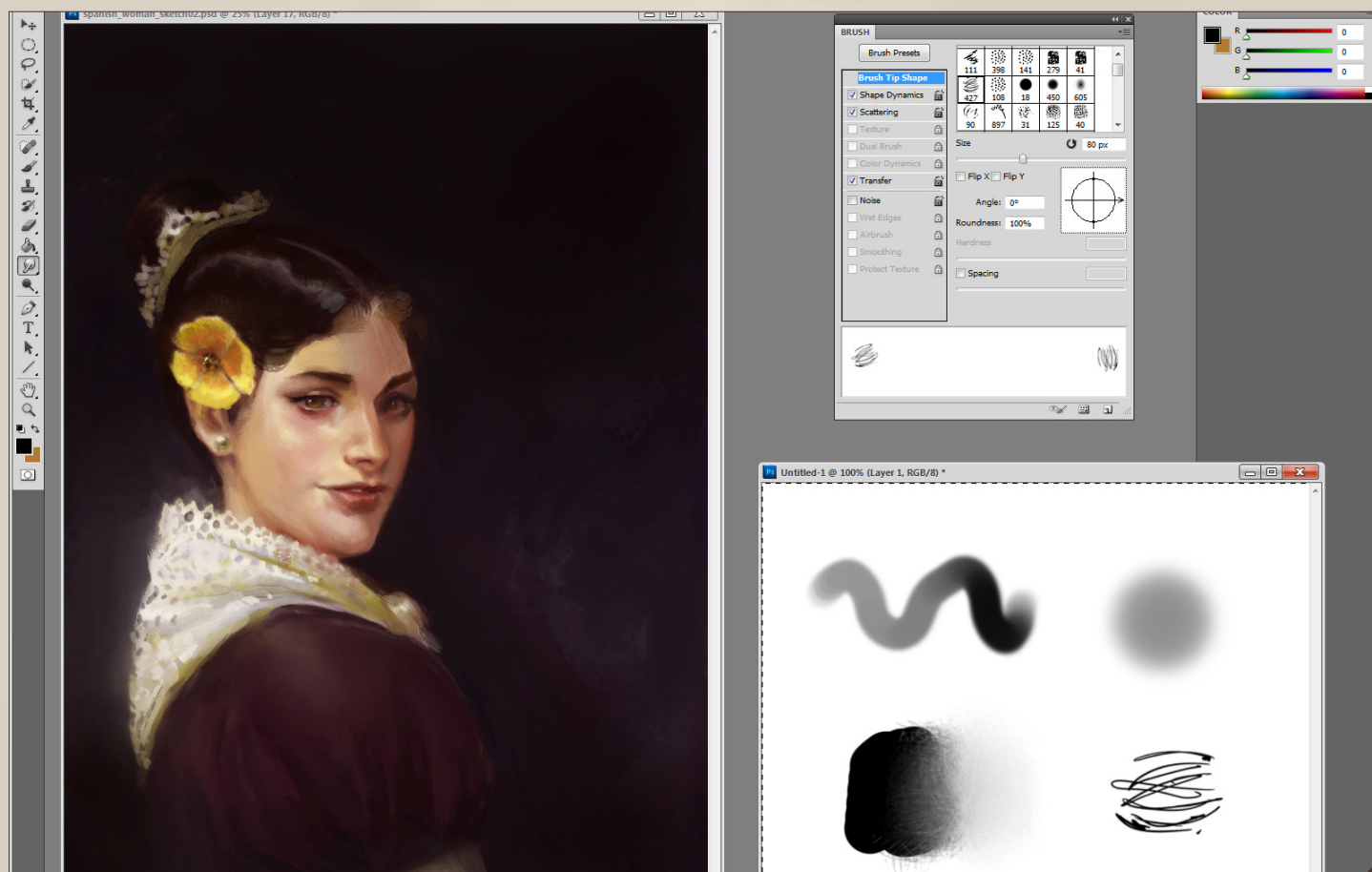+texture

+dual brush

+dual brush

09
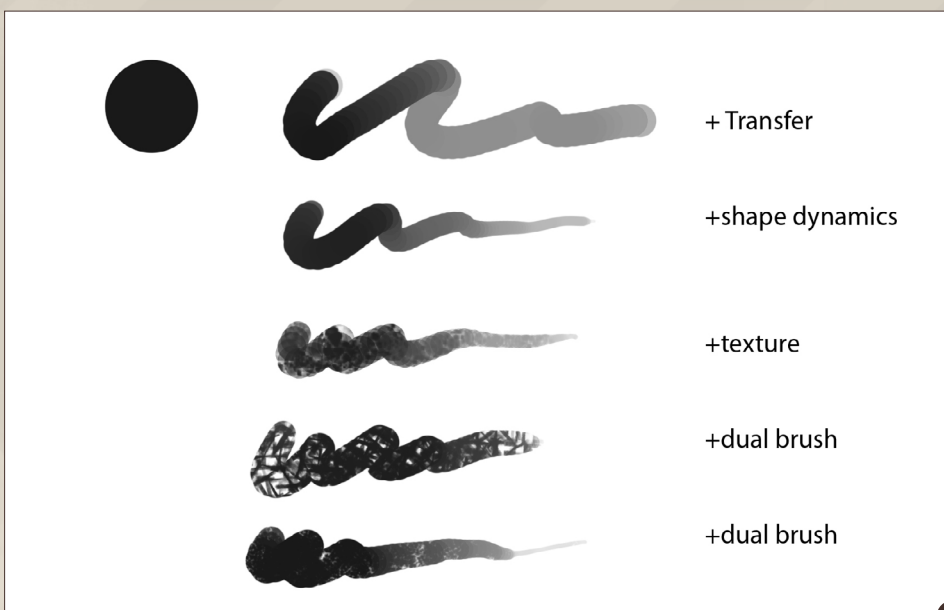
Brushes are a wonderful tool that can streamline your work, add texture and interest, or even help create some abstract shapes that can really open up your imagination. One of the best ways of learning how to create brushes is to download other people's brushes and pull them apart to find out what makes them tick. Many artists have different ways of using and creating brushes, and there are many resources out there to help you create your own brushes that fit the way you paint. But the best advice I can give is the advice I was given: experiment, play and have fun!
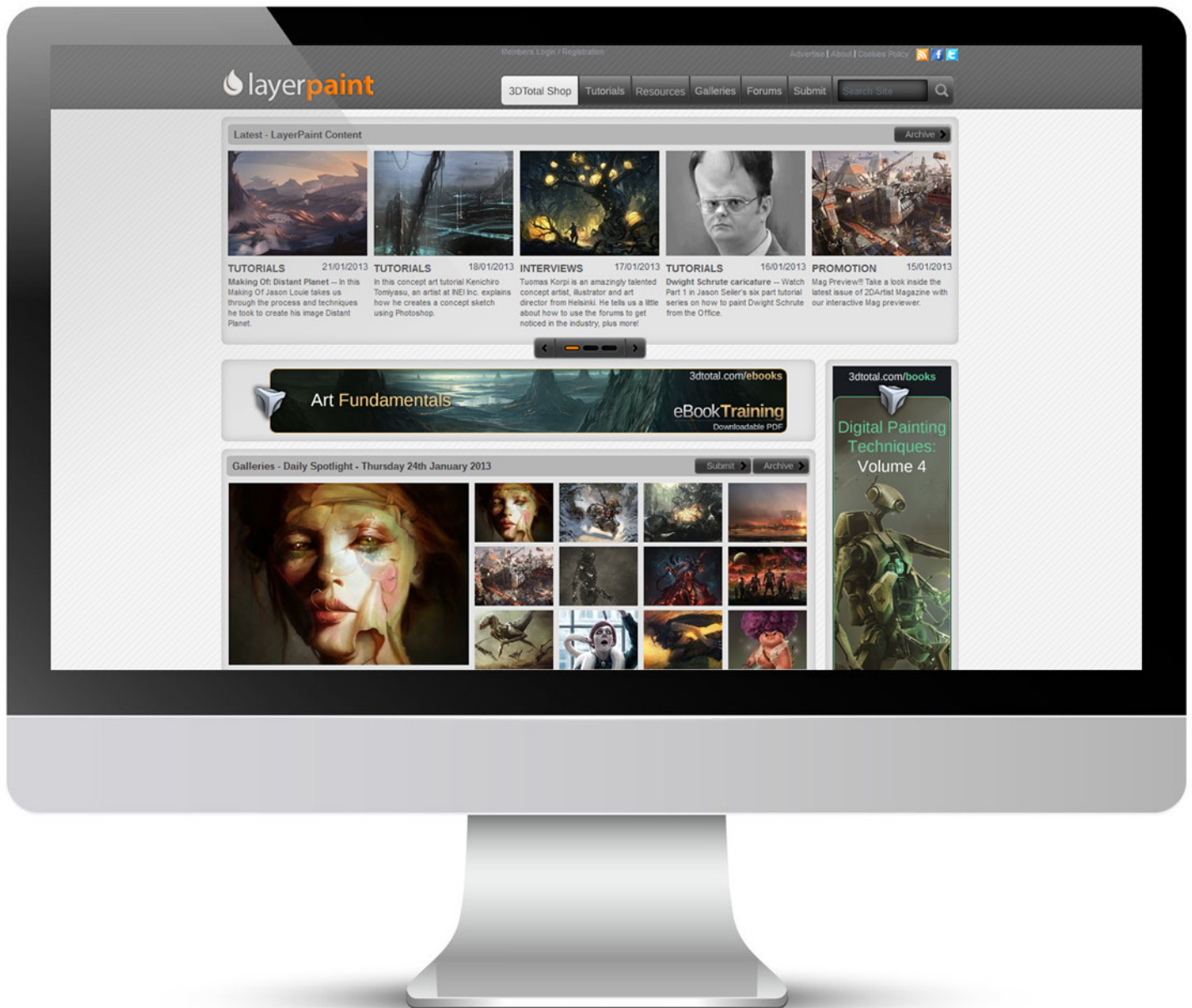
Chase Toole

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10

03

MAKING OF BY
AEKKARAT SUMUTCHAYA!

"I consider lighting as one
of the most crucial aspects
for getting a painting to
look authentic or realistic."

KITCHEN KILLER

In this month's Making Of Aekkarat Sumutchaya talks through the steps he took and the
techniques he used to create his image, *Kitchen Killer*.

www.aekkarat.blogspot.com

Kitchen Killer

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

Sawasdee ("Hello" in Thai) guys! My name is Aekkarat Sumachaya, and I'm an art director and also co-founder of ANIMANIA, an animation studio located in Bangkok, Thailand.

In my early childhood, I admired and was inspired by Akira Toriyama, the master behind *Dragon Ball*. I am also inspired by my lifestyle, by experimenting and by the environment. I then layer ideas on top with stories, personal opinions, and wild imagination. I hope people will enjoy my work and get my message.

I had two words in mind when I started this project: socialization and food. What makes us socially accepted is being seen and being seen is being recognized. Without food we would not survive; our body needs fuel so that muscles can move and the brain can think. Later we can then create work that is being recognized. These two words are the catalyst for design.

The story takes place at a restaurant and there are four characters in the scene. Each character has different specialties, skills and duties. In **Fig.01** you will see May, a hostess. She takes reservations, organizes seating, and distributes menus. She occasionally takes orders and acts as liaison between the kitchen and dining room.
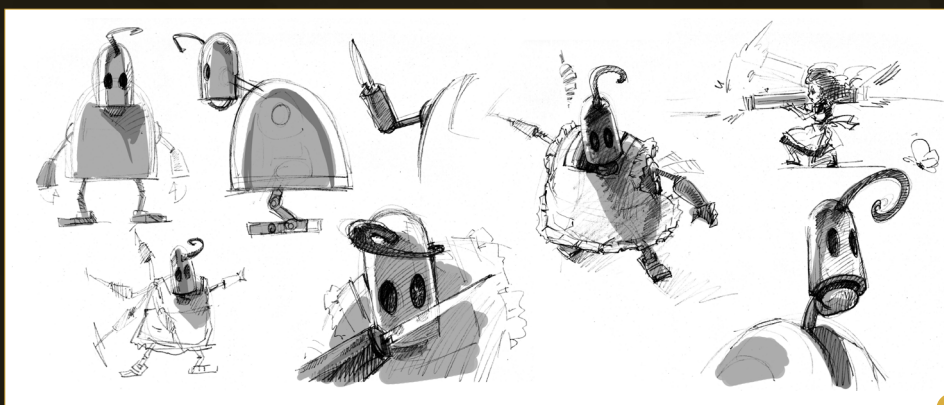
RB-5 is the head chef, responsible for all that goes on in the kitchen. His specialty is mincing, dicing and chopping with a cleaver knife, which is embedded in his left arm (**Fig.02**).
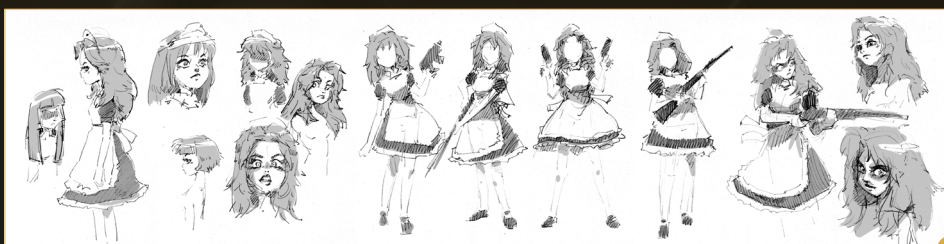
RB-3 is a lady chef, and has a Tourné knife embedded in her left arm. Her specialty is decorative cutting. She has bipolar mood swings and is captivated by butterflies, especially the ones with brightly colored wings (**Fig.03**).

RB-8 is a rodent bot. Usually we think of a rat in a restaurant as a dire threat. However, I tend to see it as a balance of nature. A rat is looking for two things: a place to live and food to eat. If they

find both there then they will enjoy living with you. The speciality of the rodent bot is taking care of unpaid customers. Be sure to pay your bill before leaving or else he will serve you a hand grenade for your dessert (**Fig.04**)!

Let's start at the beginning. I tend to think at the preparation stage that working on an image is like solving a four-piece jigsaw puzzle. Every piece has its purpose and job to accomplish. Without understanding the purpose of each piece or element of the puzzle, the work won't be as effective and will be unable to communicate as it needs to.

The first element is lines. A line can be used to express various feelings and can be used to show various moods. Understanding how to use lines can construct a visually effective

composition (**Fig.05**). Horizontal lines run parallel to the ground, and make the viewer feel comfortable, calm, peaceful and quiet (A). Upward vertical Lines show dignity, formality and strength (B). Spread lines portray action and excitement (C), whilst downward vertical lines suggest a feeling of destruction (D). I used upward vertical lines and spread lines in my work to indicate a depth that pulls the viewer into the picture, therefore creating an illusion of a space.

The second element is color (**Fig.06**). Color has temperature. Red is known as a warm color, which evokes emotions of anger and hostility. Blue is known as a cool color and is often described as calm; however, it did not match what I had in mind. Green is also a cool color and is seen as calming and refreshing, and I thought it would match well with the strongly posed characters. I darkened the green with black to create shades that can be very masculine and mysterious.

The third element is light and shadow (**Fig.07**). Morning light has specific characteristics that differentiate it from the light at noon. Morning light appears sunny and cheerful, while late afternoon tends to produce warmer light. I distracted attention from elements in this scene
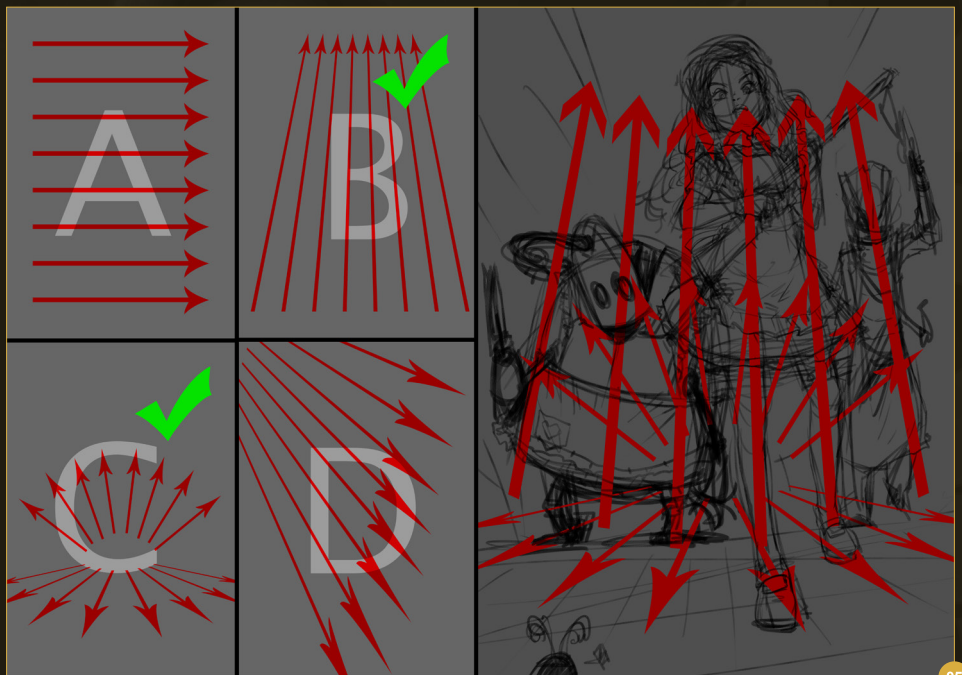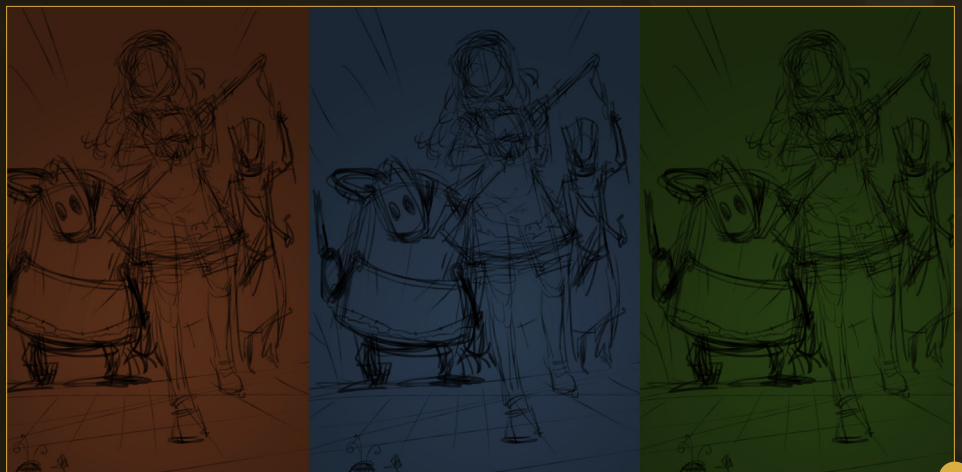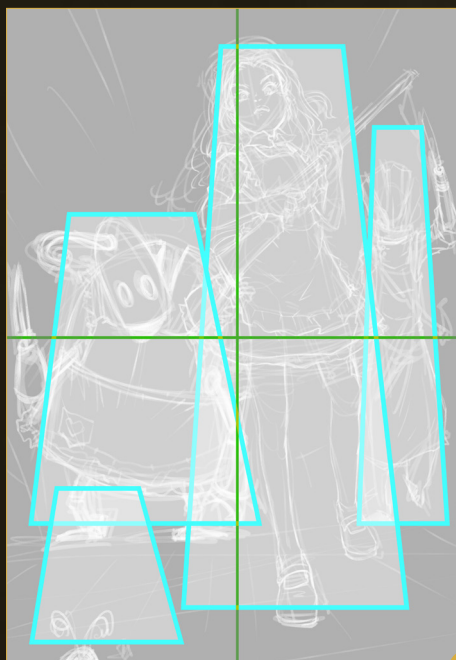

by controlling the light and its direction to give more emphasis to the main points of interest. Another technique that I use for creating mood and drawing attention to an area is to use the determined characteristics of the lighting by the sun's altitude.

Finally, the fourth element is shape (**Fig.08**). I balance out a composition by adjusting the distribution of weight across the picture plane. A group of characters with various shapes acts as a compositional strategy that creates a sense of stability in the work. I break up the picture plane into four spaces and use various combinations of shapes to achieve that balance. Asymmetry can result in compositions that are still balanced (**Fig.09**).
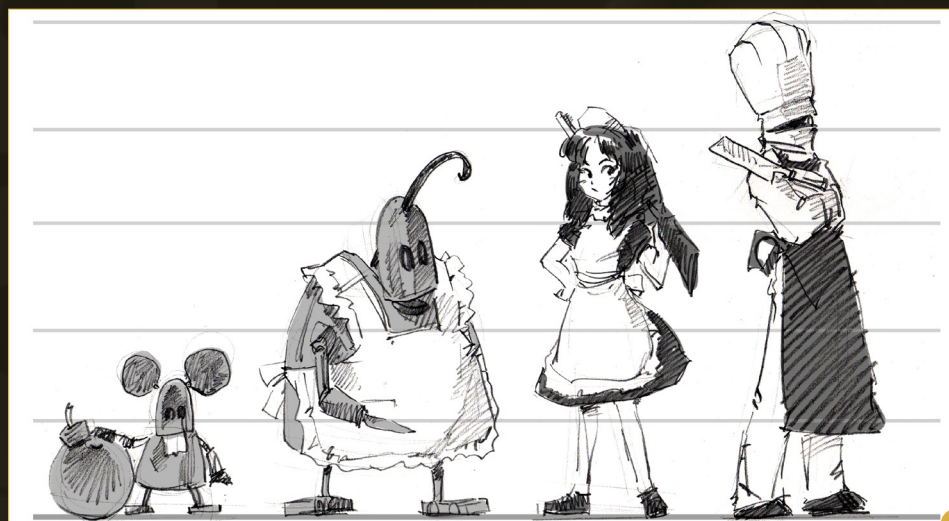
The other important aspects beside the four elements I've already mentioned are a strong composition and a good point of interest. Without the strong point of interest an image can be a little predictable. Establishing a composition before beginning to work with specific imagery is a must (**Fig.10**).

After everything was planned, it was time to execute the plan. One common technique that I have been using in digital painting lately is layering; building up the artwork layer by layer. These are the two brushes settings that I used (**Fig.11**).

With brush A, I set the opacity to 75-80% and for brush B I set the opacity to 75-80%. These were commonly use with Overlay and Multiply layer modes (**Fig.12**).

In **Fig.13** I roughly laid down the direction of the light. The main light source comes from a crack in the rooftop. Cool color tones also come from the main light source, which reflects back to the characters. I consider lighting as one of the most
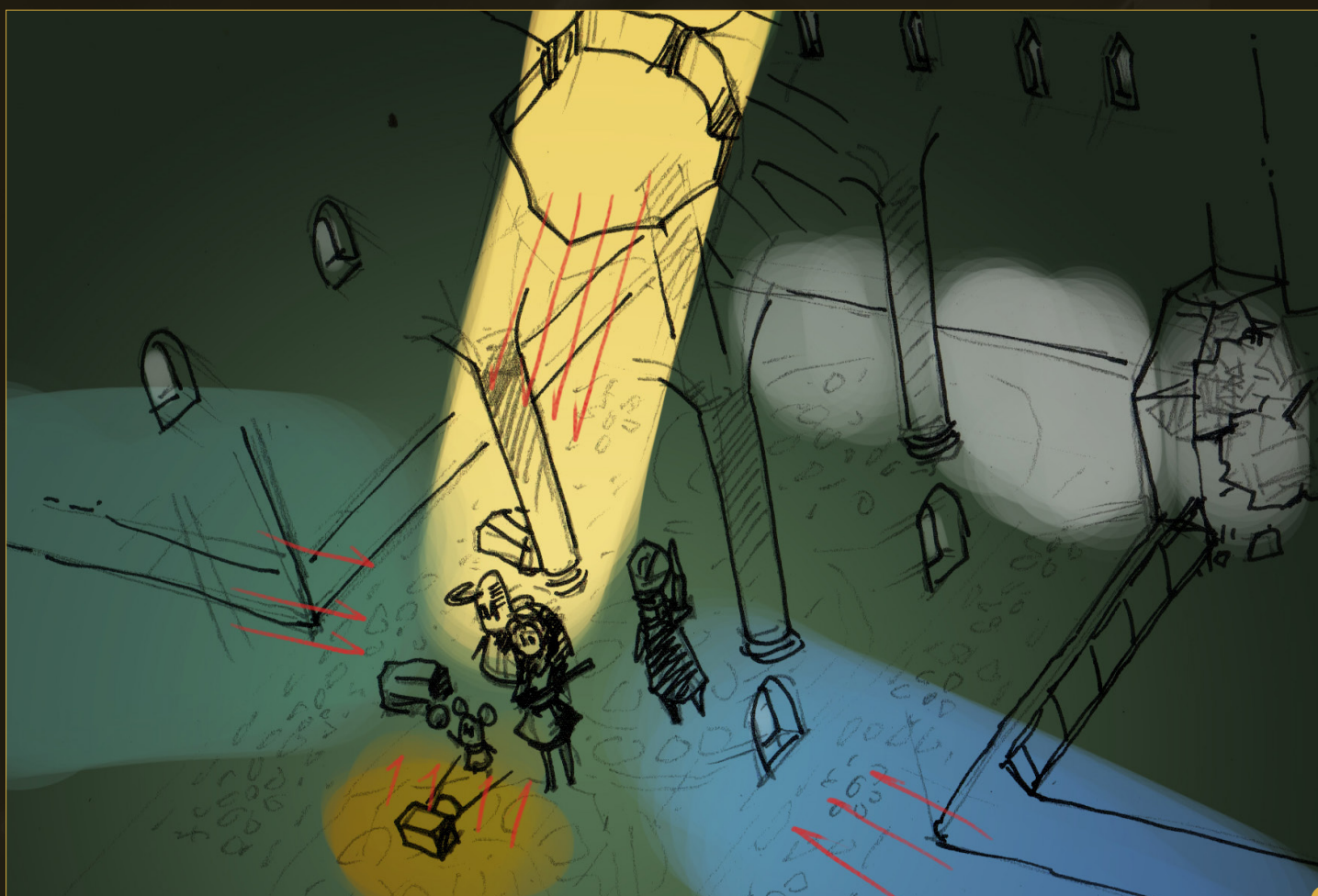
crucial aspects for getting a painting to look authentic or realistic.

I then added smoke, dust and dirt (**Fig.14**). Floating dust allows shafts of light to be seen. I used a texture layer set to Linear Dodge (Add) mode, then I used brush B set to Overlay blending mode to blend it in. The final touch was adjusting the exposure layer for light and shadow accordingly.

I spent roughly 8-10 hours on Kitchen Killer; 1-2 hours before I went to work and another 4-5 hours on the weekend. I find the very act of painting and drawing to be relaxing. I would consider it a hobby in which I get to share my ideas with like-minded people and friends. Visit my YouTube channel for how-to videos at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw-Fdo027jY and www.youtube.com/watch?v=2L51Z5cdlso. Thank you for your kind appreciation of my work.

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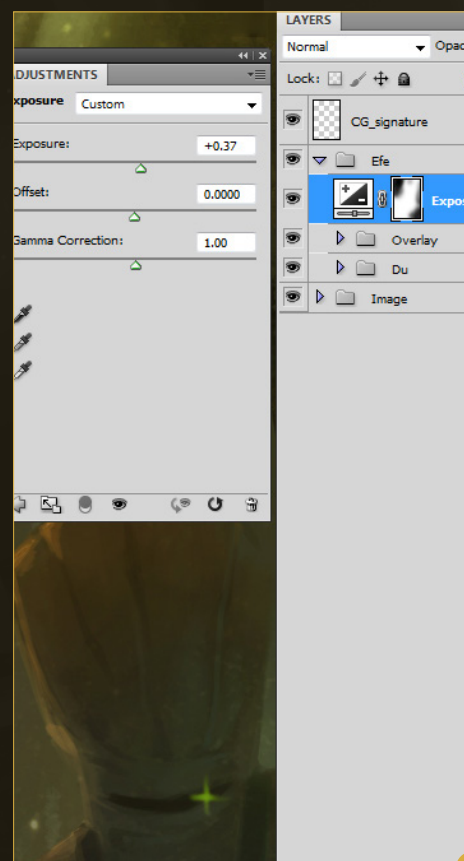
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Image By Ling Yun

Exclusive Making Of

ARISES

by Levi Hopkins

Arises

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

As a Senior Concept Artist on Guildwars 2 I spent my time on a variety of exciting projects. The piece in this article was actually created for the Guildwars 2 cinematic. Often when I wasn't designing props, architecture, or environments I was tasked with creating paintings for the in-game cinematics. The creation of Guildwars 2 in-game cinematics consists of a multi-layered painting created by the concept artist which is then shipped over to the cinematics team. The cinematic team would then use their insane motion-graphic skills to create basically moving paintings. Creating the cinematic paintings can prove difficult at times because you can never flatten your image. You have to maintain a large number of layers that can later be moved around by the cinematics team. Any sort of color adjustment, contrast tweak or layer mode has to be applied to each individual layer.

This specific piece was created for a set of three different shots involving a massive dragon flying over the land causing destruction in its wake. In reality I made six full illustrations for about ten seconds of screen time! Each shot had a before and after state as the dragon passed through the image. I was given a loose storyboard to set me on the right path for this piece.

As with most of my work I never have a go-to process that I use to create an image. This keeps everything exploratory and allows me to stumble upon happy accidents and new techniques. For this piece I started by taking the previous background layer from the painting I did for the first shot in this sequence (**Fig.01**). I ran a simple motion blur filter on it to knock out all the detail but maintain the values and palette
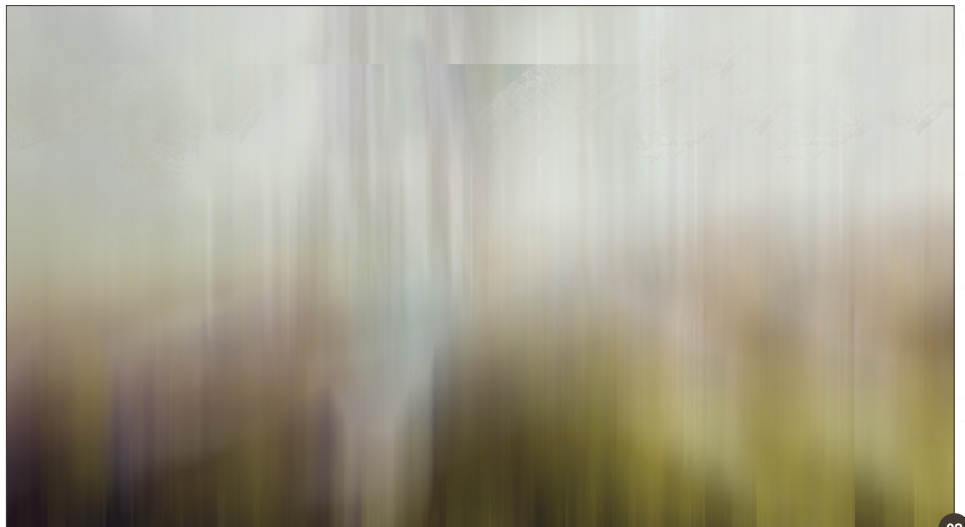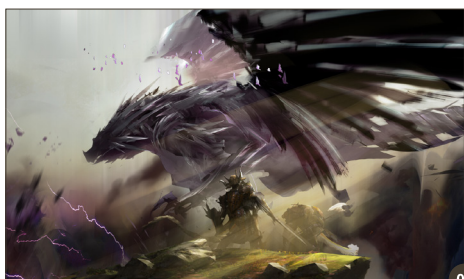
already established (**Fig.02**). I often like to reuse older paintings and layer in them in a variety of modes, along with brush strokes, to create an abstract base to begin with rather than a blank white canvas.

The next step in this piece was to begin with the foreground elements. In accordance with the established story board I would need a couple of characters placed in the foreground to view the oncoming destruction. To do this I simply

painted an abstract chunk of land and a simple loose silhouette for the first character (**Fig.03**). After I had the base set up I began to render the first character, added a second one and then developed the chunk of land supporting them (**Fig.04**). I also threw in some quick brush strokes to block in the effect that could allude to a dragon flying by. I then decided to block in loosely what I imagined the dragon to look like (**Fig.05**). The fun thing about these cinematics is that they are super stylized so you can have

fun with shapes and paint strokes to create everything. I also had to keep everything on layers so I could easily hop around the painting and be able to turn elements on and off. This helped maintain my interest and prevented me from spending too much time rendering anyone element.

Now that I had the foreground elements blocked in I moved onto the most important aspect of the piece which was the city-like elements in the background. I continued with the abstract method of establishing the piece by blocking in selections with the Lasso tool. I then sampled some of the motion blurred background and darkened it (**Fig.06**). Now with a very loose idea of what I wanted I began to use a simple square brush to block in larger shapes, add textures and use the Warp tool to drop everything into perspective (**Fig.07**). Due to time restraints being imposed on this piece I also employed some photo reference as textures to quickly achieve some finer details this piece.

With a simple background base established I decided I needed a bit more overall depth. A quick way to achieve this was to simply copy all of the painted city elements and paste them into a new layer, lighten them, and then drop them a layer back (**Fig.08**). I then painted into certain areas and added some more elements to really lock in the depth. Since I had added a bit more depth, I now wanted to bring some of the city elements closer to the foreground. This also helps lead the eye from the foreground all the way to the background. I quickly blocked in a few shapes with a brush and then pasted in the previous detail to continue building the city out to the right (**Fig.09**) and the left (**Fig.10**) of the canvas. I also of course added the mandatory fantasy birds in the background for scale.

At this point in the process I stepped away from my computer, grabbed some snacks, ran some laps around the office and then came back to the painting to correct any issues I may have previously missed. After some slight polishing I decided this piece was ready for the pre-destruction phase of the shot. I've included a quick glimpse of the 'post-destruction' painting
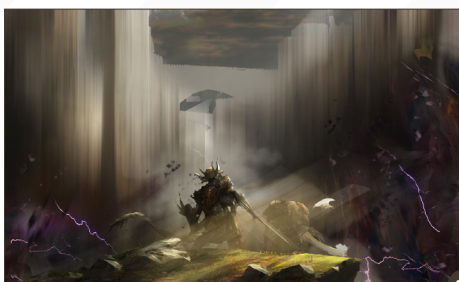
after the dragon has flown through the image (**Fig.11**). Once again this was done with a mind-numbing amount of layers and effects, but in the end it all paid off when I got to see it in motion.

Levi Hopkins

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